

PHD
1939
sh
C.2

BOSTON UNIVERSITY CHENERY LIBRARY

Regulations for the Use of Manuscript Theses

Unpublished theses submitted for the Master's and Doctor's degrees and deposited in the Boston University Chenery Library are open for inspection, but are to be used only with due regard to the rights of the authors. Bibliographical references may be noted, but passages may be copied only with the permission of the author, and proper credit must be given in subsequent written or published work. Extensive copying or publication of the thesis in whole or in part requires also the consent of the Dean of the Graduate School of Boston University.

This thesis by has been used by the following persons, whose signatures attest their acceptance of the above restrictions.

A library which borrows this thesis for use by its patrons is expected to secure the signature of each user.

NAME and ADDRESS of USER

BORROWING LIBRARY

DATE

BOSTON UNIVERSITY
GRADUATE SCHOOL

Dissertation

THE INFLUENCE OF FORMGESCHICHTE UPON OUR VIEW
OF THE HISTORICAL JESUS

BY

Paul Edward Sheldon

(A.B., Boston University, 1930;
S.T.B., Boston University, 1933)

submitted in partial fulfilment of the
requirements for the degree of
Doctor of Philosophy

1939

BOSTON UNIVERSITY
COLLEGE OF LIBERAL ARTS
LIBRARY

63303

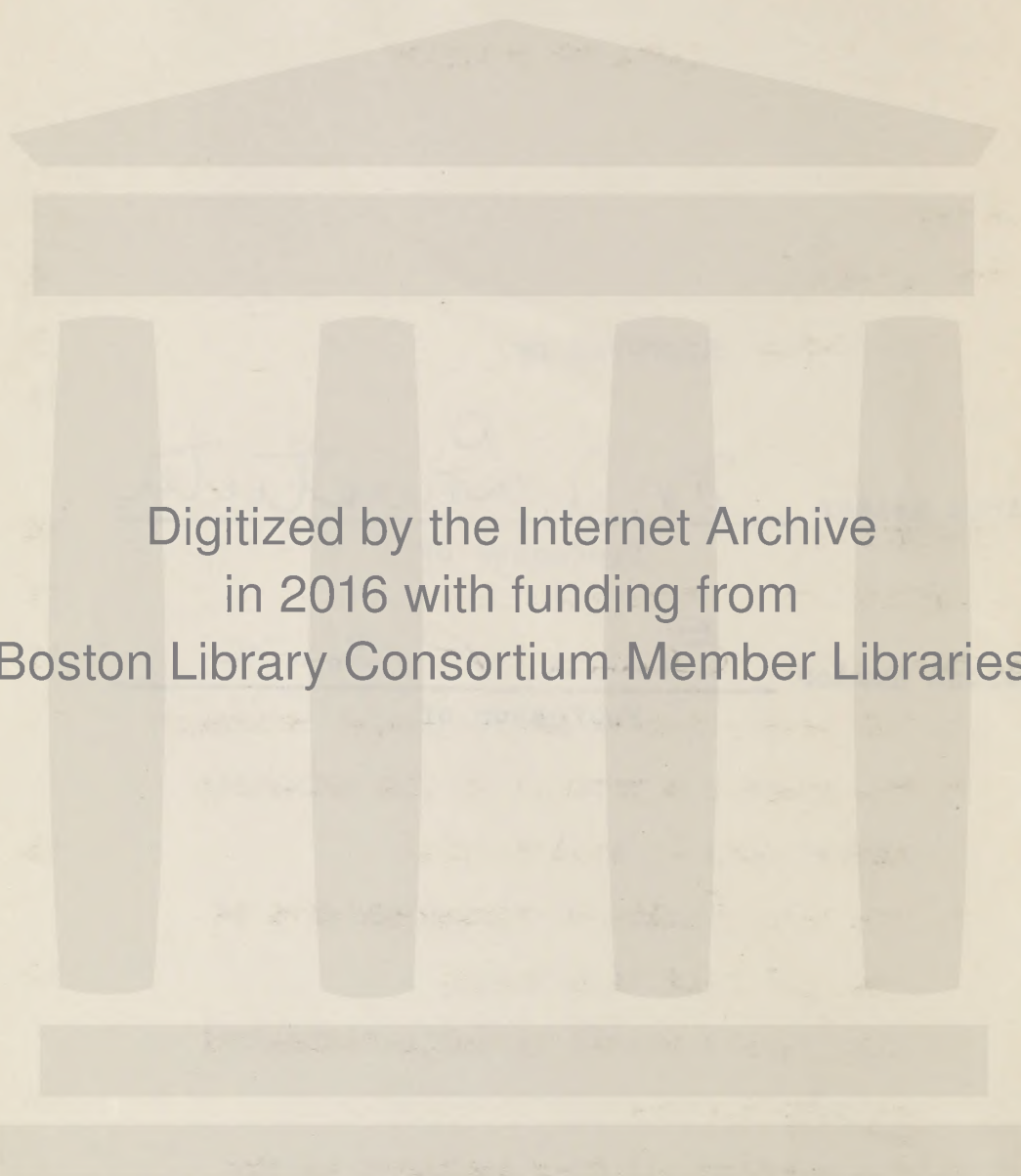
PhD
1939
sh
copy 2

2

Approved by

First Reader Dr. J. Lowstuter
Professor of

Second Reader Edwin P. Booth
Professor of



Digitized by the Internet Archive
in 2016 with funding from
Boston Library Consortium Member Libraries

TABLE OF CONTENTS

Title page	1
Approval sheet	2
Table of contents	3
Preface	11
 I. INTRODUCTION	 13
A. Definition of Formgeschichte	13
B. Some axioms of Formgeschichte	13
1. Unliterary nature of the gospel writings	13
2. The gospels a product of the community rather than of individuals	13
3. The relationship of Formgeschichte to the oral tradition theory	14
4. The gospels viewed as collections, not as compositions	14
5. The question of form compared to the question of historical accuracy	16
C. Statement of the thesis: FORMGESCHICHTE RIGHTFULLY INCREASES OUR CONFIDENCE IN THE HISTORICAL RELIABILITY OF THE GOSPEL ACCOUNTS	

ABOUT JESUS

19

1. Formgeschichte is a valid method for historical study of the gospels. The forms can be identified, and the laws which govern them can be formulated 19
2. The synoptic story of Jesus received essentially its present form at a very early date, and is therefore trustworthy 19
3. There was a wide circulation and acceptance of this material prior to 60 A.D. 20
4. The gospel account represents a clear choice of the most historically important elements in the life of Jesus, so far as these elements were known to the early Christian community 20
5. This view of the synoptic gospels is essentially in accord with the Fourth Gospel and the writings of Paul 20
- D. Our point of view 21
 1. Our view of the historical Jesus is dependent upon the historical accuracy of the gospels 23
 2. There is no literary form without literary content 23

II. REVIEW OF PREVIOUS INVESTIGATION IN THE FIELD 26

- A. History of Formgeschichte; its chief exponents 26

1. Menzies	28
2. Wellhausen	34
3. Dibelius	36
4. Schmidt	56
5. Albertz	62
6. Bultmann	71
7. Bertram	81
8. Fascher	83
9. Easton	87
10. Kundsia	96
11. Riddle	104
12. Grant	111
13. Taylor	112
14. Fiebig	120
15. Dodd	127
16. Scott	132
17. Miscellaneous	145
18. Conclusions	154
B. The place and influence of Formgeschichte; a fresh approach, yet definitely related to the whole body of modern New Testament research	158
C. The sources with which Formgeschichte must work; analogies in rabbinic and Greek literature	162
D. The probable future of Formgeschichte as an approach to the New Testament	179

III. THE VALIDITY OF FORMGESCHICHTE AS A BASIS FOR HISTORICAL CONCLUSIONS ABOUT THE LIFE OF JESUS, AND PRELIMINARY EVIDENCE IN VERIFICATION OF THE GOSPEL ACCOUNT	182
A. The forms themselves	182
1. What they are, and how they are to be classified	182
a. Parables	185
b. Sayings-forms	187
c. Dialogues	193
d. Miracle stories	199
e. Passion story	207
f. Narrative anecdotes	211
g. Connective and editorial material	212
2. Some of their general characteristics	213
a. The forms are really forms	214
b. Most of the forms are brief	214
c. Related forms are freely grouped together	214
d. We can recognize the motives which led to the preservation of certain items	214
e. The forms show a definite relationship to the kerygma	214
f. The forms testify to the historical value of the material	216
g. Proverbs are freely used	216

h. The forms give evidence as to the nature of the Christian community	217
i. The Sitz im Leben of the gospel material can best be found in the life of Jesus	218
j. Necessary deletions on the ground of intruding theological interest are few	219
k. The forms are preserved entire	224
l. The forms are easy to remember	225
3. Responsibility to consider them in the light of the first century, and not of modern times	226
4. The laws that govern them; how tradition preserved them	229
a. The form-unit is transmitted in an essentially pure state	231
b. Direct discourse is transmitted more accurately than indirect discourse	231
c. The poetic elements in the forms tend to simplify their preservation	232
d. The forms tend to become shorter, more rounded, and less detailed as time goes on	232
e. Personal and place names tend to disappear	233

f. Folk tradition has an innate tendency to retain unaltered the substance of a story	234
B. Some statements about possible earlier documents or collections	234
C. The method is chiefly concerned with literary forms. This fact enables it to offer a working basis for historical judgments	246
IV. FURTHER VERIFICATION OF THE RELIABILITY OF THE GOSPEL PICTURE OF THE HISTORICAL JESUS	250
A. Verisimilitude as a proof of the early origin and historical reliability of the gospel forms, especially as found in Mark	250
1. The presence of details	250
2. The gospel forms include those items which represent a normal psychological reaction to the action described or the saying recorded	296
3. Comparative length of the form-units in the synoptic gospels	302
4. Summary of the evidence on verisimilitude	307
B. The <u>ipsissima verba</u> and the <u>ipsissimus spiritus</u> as complementary aspects of historical reliability in the gospel material	310

C. Evidence for the early origin and accurate preservation of the gospel form-units. There is a consistent picture of the historical Jesus	333
1. Topographical references	333
2. Jewish character of the gospels	334
3. Jewish thought-forms of the gospels	338
4. Consideration of typical Jewish problems	340
5. The lack of later Hellenistic forms	343
6. The forms are easy to remember	344
7. Importance of oral tradition in first-century Judaism and Christianity	350
8. The preservation of unusual elements	351
9. Interest in the typical incident	353
10. Poetic elements in the gospel forms	360
11. Historical uniformity of the tradition	372
D. The gospels have authentic first-century forms	386
E. Unique position of the synoptic gospels	396
1. Why Formgeschichte cannot successfully be applied to the Pauline letters, or to Acts and John	396
2. Comparisons between the synoptic gospels and uncanonical writings	409
3. Result of these comparisons	419

F. Formgeschichte testifies to the dominant historical place of the Jesus-element in early Christian experience. The material finds its proper Sitz im Leben in the life of the historical Jesus	421
1. Evidence from the gospels themselves	424
2. Evidence in Acts and the Pauline letters	425
3. The bearing of Formgeschichte upon these facts, and conclusion on the question of gospel historicity	430

V. CONCLUSIONS: THE PREPONDERANCE OF EVIDENCE IN FAVOR OF ESSENTIAL HISTORICAL ACCURACY IN THE GOSPEL ACCOUNTS

	432
A digest of the dissertation	436
Bibliography	442
Autobiography of the candidate	448
Photograph of the candidate	449

PREFACE

Modern Christianity is beset by an overwhelming desire to know with certainty the facts about the life of Jesus. Did he really live? Do the records give us a true picture of his personality? Have we his authentic teachings? Can we reconstruct his life to the satisfaction of modern historians? All the so-called higher criticism of the gospels leads eventually to these fundamental questions. Who was Jesus? What did he do? Is the story true? Here lies the crux not only of Biblical study, but of all our faith.

There is an answer to the question, and a reassurance for our faith. It comes through a new method of gospel study, commonly called *Formgeschichte*. The term does not fully describe the method, and *formgeschichtlich* writers have been regrettably mechanical in much of their work. They have hesitated to relate their study to the historical questions about Jesus. But such a relationship exists, and sheds amazing light upon the gospel story. It is the purpose of this study to use *Formgeschichte* for the verification of gospel historicity, and thereby to authenticate the Christian faith.

The term *Formgeschichte* literally means form-history. In English it is sometimes called form criticism, but criticism should not be improperly understood as an unfriendly search

for flaws. We shall use the German term as if it were an ordinary English word. Other terms which will be so treated are formgeschichtlich (the adjective from Formgeschichte), and Sitz im Leben. The latter means setting in life, and refers to the life situation which gave rise to a particular unit of gospel material. Other terms which might require translation are ipsissima verba and ipsissimus spiritus. The former has reference to the exact words spoken by Jesus, and the latter to the exact spirit (or attitude) of Jesus.

In a study of this kind the author stands under obligation to many predecessors -- so many, in fact, that their thoughts creep unconsciously into our material. In a field where the material is plentiful and the opinions varied, such borrowing is unavoidable. We build a new superstructure only as we test and examine old foundations. The second chapter, dealing with previous work in the field, should be viewed as constructive criticism rather than a series of book reviews. It is the necessary basis of further progress, partly because of the varied opinions which have entered the field, and partly because so many have misunderstood the true nature of Formgeschichte.

I. INTRODUCTION

A. Definition.

Formgeschichte may be defined as that approach to literature which assumes that the history of literature is best studied as the history of its forms. This approach was first tried in connection with certain branches of Greek literature, and has more recently been applied to the gospels.

B. Some axioms of Formgeschichte.

In order to apply this type of criticism there are certain preliminary assumptions which must be made about the gospels themselves. Otherwise the procedure is only a scholarly exercise, and makes no real contribution to New Testament knowledge. Chief among these assumptions are the following:

1. It is assumed that the synoptic gospels are essentially unliterary writings -- that is, not created in a formal and literary manner as a biographer might write the history of some great man today. On the other hand, the gospels may not be regarded as mere private notes. If Formgeschichte is to be a valid tool, the individuality of a possible author or authors must be largely discounted.

2. Formgeschichte assumes that the true origin of the synoptics lies in their unliterary development in small

1. INTRODUCTION

A. Definition

Foreigners may be defined as those persons who are not citizens of the country in which they are living. This definition is based on the fact that the history of the country is written in the history of its people. This definition is also in accordance with the common usage of the word "foreigner".

B. Scope of the study

In order to apply this type of definition there are certain preliminary assumptions which must be made. The first assumption is that the country is only a geographical entity, and that no real distinction is to be made between the foreigner and the native. This means that the foreigner is not a person who is not a citizen of the country, but a person who is not a native of the country.

It is assumed that the foreigner is not a person who is not a citizen of the country, but a person who is not a native of the country. This is a very important assumption, because it is the basis of the entire study. The second assumption is that the foreigner is not a person who is not a citizen of the country, but a person who is not a native of the country. This is a very important assumption, because it is the basis of the entire study.

The third assumption is that the foreigner is not a person who is not a citizen of the country, but a person who is not a native of the country. This is a very important assumption, because it is the basis of the entire study.

units. There is not one author, nor an author and a redactor; there are many contributing authors, and the various portions of the gospels have passed through a rather long process of development before reaching their present composite form. In this development the entire Christian community had a hand, and as a result the gospels bear the marks of contemporary unliterary thought, speech, and action.

3. As a corollary to the above it is assumed that the gospel units were first handed down by word of mouth, with consequent changes and variations through successive years. There is nothing new or startling about this idea. It is reminiscent of the old oral tradition theories, but goes a good deal farther. The real argument develops over the extent of the oral tradition, and the length of time it remained in purely oral form.

4. The synoptic gospels are collections, not compositions. Those who were responsible for their final form were compilers, not authors. This view can never be thoroughly sustained; it is one of the hypotheses which seem valid because they simplify the work of the student who approaches the gospels from the *formgeschichtlich* viewpoint. Its effect is to reduce the responsibility of those who gave the gospels their final form. A compiler cannot be responsible for errors that have crept into the tradition before he receives it. He can only do his best to retain the purity of the

There is not a student, not an author, not a teacher, who does not have a certain responsibility for the future of the world. This responsibility is not only a moral one, but also a practical one. It is a responsibility that is shared by all of us, and it is a responsibility that we must all accept. We must all do our part to make the world a better place, and we must all be prepared to accept the consequences of our actions. This is the only way to ensure a bright future for all of us.

The responsibility of the individual is not only a moral one, but also a practical one. It is a responsibility that is shared by all of us, and it is a responsibility that we must all accept. We must all do our part to make the world a better place, and we must all be prepared to accept the consequences of our actions. This is the only way to ensure a bright future for all of us.

The responsibility of the individual is not only a moral one, but also a practical one. It is a responsibility that is shared by all of us, and it is a responsibility that we must all accept. We must all do our part to make the world a better place, and we must all be prepared to accept the consequences of our actions. This is the only way to ensure a bright future for all of us.

The responsibility of the individual is not only a moral one, but also a practical one. It is a responsibility that is shared by all of us, and it is a responsibility that we must all accept. We must all do our part to make the world a better place, and we must all be prepared to accept the consequences of our actions. This is the only way to ensure a bright future for all of us.

The responsibility of the individual is not only a moral one, but also a practical one. It is a responsibility that is shared by all of us, and it is a responsibility that we must all accept. We must all do our part to make the world a better place, and we must all be prepared to accept the consequences of our actions. This is the only way to ensure a bright future for all of us.

The responsibility of the individual is not only a moral one, but also a practical one. It is a responsibility that is shared by all of us, and it is a responsibility that we must all accept. We must all do our part to make the world a better place, and we must all be prepared to accept the consequences of our actions. This is the only way to ensure a bright future for all of us.

The responsibility of the individual is not only a moral one, but also a practical one. It is a responsibility that is shared by all of us, and it is a responsibility that we must all accept. We must all do our part to make the world a better place, and we must all be prepared to accept the consequences of our actions. This is the only way to ensure a bright future for all of us.

The responsibility of the individual is not only a moral one, but also a practical one. It is a responsibility that is shared by all of us, and it is a responsibility that we must all accept. We must all do our part to make the world a better place, and we must all be prepared to accept the consequences of our actions. This is the only way to ensure a bright future for all of us.

The responsibility of the individual is not only a moral one, but also a practical one. It is a responsibility that is shared by all of us, and it is a responsibility that we must all accept. We must all do our part to make the world a better place, and we must all be prepared to accept the consequences of our actions. This is the only way to ensure a bright future for all of us.

tradition as it comes to him. Errors must be blamed on the tradition rather than the compiler -- though he, of course, may introduce new errors of his own.

The assumption that the evangelists were compilers rather than authors is no mere flight of the imagination. It can be demonstrated by comparing the gospel of Luke with Acts. On the face of the matter Luke appears to be more bound by his sources in the gospel than in Acts. The gospel shows considerably less "author".¹ Matthew can likewise be viewed as largely compilation, with a minimum of actual authorship involved. Formgeschichte completes the picture by placing Mark in the same category -- an assumption which is not as clearly established as in the cases of Matthew and Luke. Formgeschichte assumes that the Marcan material was widely used, probably in oral form, before it came to its present state. It was so widely used that it retained certain "forms" as an indelible stamp upon its character. As a wholesome contrast we ought to recognize that such writers as Burkitt see very little indication that the gospel materials ever enjoyed anything like general circulation before the time of Mark.² Formgeschichte maintains, however, that the very forms of the gospel materials are sufficient proof of their widespread use. Still a third position is that of semi-agnostics like MacKinley Helm, who writes: "In the long run it is almost impossible to go back of the use to which the evangelists have put their Gospel

1. So Dibelius, TG, 4.
2. Burkitt, CG, 143.

materials to describe the character and employment of those materials in earlier times".¹

5. It must be recognized that the chief realm of Formgeschichte has been in discussing how things are told, rather than the validity of what is said. In this thesis we will go beyond the advance guard, and seek to show that Formgeschichte has a valid place in determining the truth or falsity of the gospel accounts. The "what" is even more important than the "how" -- therefore the latter should be a valid step to the former. But we must avoid the position of Dibelius and Bultmann, whose lack of confidence in the miracle stories largely defeats their own purpose. It is not enough to break up the material into units, and then ask how these units were told. "Ultimately the whole question resolves itself into a comparison between the stories and their contexts".² Any theory concerning the pre-Marcian condition of the gospel material is pure theory, whether it takes recourse to written collections of parables, Q, or oral transmission. As hypotheses these ideas deserve discussion, but it is unwise to draw too many conclusions from the fact that a particular story is told in somewhat the way a modern investigator thinks he would have told that kind of a story in the first century. One of our chief problems will be to consider the forms of the New Testament narratives in the light of their own times, and to

1. Helm, AP, 132.

2. Lake, INT, 19.

avoid considering them in the light of the twentieth century. The New Testament criticism of today has too much hypothesis and too little conclusion, with a minimum of proof. It is a poor theorem which has only enough semblance of proof to make one think of the hypothesis. Reasoning should proceed in the other direction. The hypothesis should be self-evident; thereafter one is justified in looking for proof leading toward his desired conclusions.

On the other hand, it is not true that Formgeschichte must concern itself only with literary form and not with historical interpretation. This dissertation will have a good deal to say about the matter of content and interpretation. It is impossible to separate these considerations from that of literary form. Not one of the authors in this field has been able to separate the two. For example, Dibelius derives even the names for some of his forms from his own opinion of their historicity. What he regards as historically doubtful he lists under the form "legend"; what he considers to be a good story, and historically little more, he calls a "tale". This is definitely putting the cart before the horse. Our task will be to reverse the process, and seek to study first the form; thereafter to discover whether this form gives evidence of historicity; and finally, to compare this result with our previous view of the material. Any other process cannot be called Formgeschichte.

avoid considering them in the light of the historical context.
The two fundamental principles of logic are too much emphasized
and the little communication with a minimum of power. It is a
fact that while the only enough knowledge of power is made
and that of the hypothesis. However, it is not possible in the
other direction. The question is about the self-interest.
The answer is in fact in looking for the first logical reason
the answer is obvious.

On the other hand, it is not true that the hypothesis

and the answer itself will with liberty have and not else
with this hypothesis. This hypothesis will have a good
idea to say that the answer of constant and independent.
It is impossible to say that these considerations from that of
the answer. But one of the answers in this field has been
only to say that for some. While the answer is
the answer the same of the answer from the answer of their
independent. That is, the answer is historically constant in
the answer the first "answer", that is, the answer to be a good
answer, and the answer is the answer, he calls a "rule". This
is the answer to the answer the answer the answer. One says
all the answer the answer, and not to say that the
form, the answer to the answer the answer the answer of
the answer and finally, to say that the answer is the
present view of the answer. The answer is the answer to
the answer.

Moreover, it is impossible to talk about "pure forms". Not one of the writers on Formgeschichte has discovered sufficient grounds to do this. It would be like talking about "churches" -- meaning the buildings which house worship rather than the worship, the worshippers, the ecclesiastical organization, or the tenets of faith. On the other hand, a church building which is adorned with a star, a crescent, a cross, or a colonial front, may give an intelligent hint in regard to the type of faith practiced there. It must be kept in mind that these are hints only, and we must investigate further to find whether the worship in the building agrees with the symbolism of external form. It is exactly the same in formgeschichtlich investigation. The form of the literature gives us clear hints; it is molded along certain lines, and invites further study along those lines. But literary form cannot exist apart from content and interpretation. If it could, the investigator's task would be much easier.

There is an important word of warning to be introduced at this point. The student of Formgeschichte must avoid treating the units of the gospel material on a basis of his established views of the synoptic problem. It is sometimes said that Formgeschichte tends to follow in the line of the oral tradition theory, yet as a working basis it assumes the validity of the two-source theory -- especially in regard to the priority of Mark and his use by Matthew and Luke. Theoretically Formgeschichte ought to consider the material in

units without regard to anything but the form. Only when the form-study yields no fruit should the two-source theory be introduced as a stepping stone. This stepping stone will save us needless repetition in studying the double and triple traditions, and perhaps it can help in establishing what might be called a "Q Form". Beyond that it ought not to influence the formgeschichtlich approach.

C. Statement of the thesis regarding the influence
of Formgeschichte upon our view of
the historical Jesus.

The sole contention of this paper is that the gospels, when viewed from the standpoint of Formgeschichte, constitute an essentially valid account of the historical life of Jesus -- more valid, in fact, than has generally been believed. The arguments which support this contention are varied and cumulative, but many of them may be crystallized under the following heads:

1. Formgeschichte is a valid method for historical study of the gospels. The forms can be identified, and the laws which govern them can be formulated.

2. The synoptic story of Jesus existed in essentially its present form at a very early date -- almost ever since the death of Jesus. Thus Formgeschichte bridges the gap between 30 A.D. and 70 A.D., and gives historical credibility to the gospel account of Jesus' life. In

establishing this point it will be necessary to make a comparison of the canonical gospels with the later pseudo-gospels. It must be recognized that this increased confidence in the historicity of the gospel account does not solve all our problems. E.g., the matter of miracles, instead of being simplified becomes more complex, and the way is paved for a large and bothersome subjective element on the part of the critic.

3. The gospel material not only existed, but was widely circulated in essentially its present form during the years 30 A.D. to 60 A.D.. Mark did not draw his material out of a vacuum or make it from thin air. It had been used and accepted. Probably the earliest portion of the material to gain this acceptance was the Passion story; then, bit by bit, the other material achieved the same status.

4. On the above basis, our present gospel material represents the historical choice not of one man or a few men, but of the entire Christian community. The personal influence of the collector is minimized.

5. This view of the synoptic gospels is essentially in accord with the Fourth Gospel and the writings of Paul. That is, these other writings contain nothing which invalidates the formgeschichtlich view of the synoptics, or our increased confidence in the authenticity of the synoptic story of Jesus' life.

D. Our point of view.

It is not our purpose to treat the above arguments individually, as such an approach would involve duplication of material. The arguments hang together as a unit -- a sort of point of view -- and we will seek to sustain them on this basis. They cannot be treated in isolation. Rather than state arbitrary theses and then search the world for proof, real research seeks the evidence first and derives the conclusions afterward. These summaries would naturally appear in the last chapter, but we have set them down here as an aid to understanding the material to follow.

Heretofore it has been the chief purpose of form-geschichtlich critics to isolate one literary form from another, and thereby discover the theology of the early Christian church. They have emphasized the findings of the method in regard to what Dibelius¹ calls legends, tales, and the mythological element. This method reverses the normal process and runs the risk of being highly subjective. Everything that the investigator does not like, and everything he personally doubts, can be attributed to the inroads of first-century Christian theology. Thus Bultmann comes to a sweeping conclusion that the ethics of Jesus as recorded in the gospels are a community invention, and by no means to be associated with the historical Jesus. At the same time he chooses to retain the apocalyptic

1. Dibelius, TG, Ch. XI.

element as a historical heritage from Jesus. He is willing to have Jesus foster an apocalypticism along Jewish lines, but he is unwilling to credit him with anything distinctive in the field of ethics. Our protest is this: Even if the community was responsible for part of the literary setting of Jesus' ethics, it created that setting because it believed the ethics to have come directly from Jesus. The community was the carrier of truth, the trustee of facts. It did not invent for the sake of invention; it couched its heritage in the forms most natural and suitable for everyday use.

Thus it becomes our purpose, in part at least, to reverse the approach of Dibelius and Bultmann. Instead of using Formgeschichte to reconstruct an imaginary theology, we shall take what we already know about that theology as our starting point. We can also take account of the known influence of Jewish sources, or of Jewish thought where no sources are concerned.¹ Then, having made necessary deletions, we retain the greater portion of the material as having a historic core. It becomes the work of Formgeschichte to evaluate this historic element on a basis of observable literary phenomena and the known rules governing literary history.

Two other assumptions are necessary to an intelligent estimate of our approach. These are:

1. E.g., Dibelius regards the stories of John the Baptizer and of the annunciation as more Jewish than Christian; TG, 124.

1. We assume that our view of the historical Jesus goes hand in hand with the historical accuracy of the gospel material. This would appear to be self-evident. If Formgeschichte proves an aid in establishing the trustworthiness of the gospel records, then the historicity of Jesus is strengthened. The historicity of the gospel account and the historicity of Jesus are, for practical purposes, synonymous.

2. There is no such thing as form without content -- any more than there can be a can without contents. Its very emptiness would be a necessary element in describing its form. It is in vain to say that Formgeschichte must concern itself entirely with form, and say nothing about the content or the significance of the material itself. A mere classification of forms, although valuable, is not very inspiring. If the name "Formgeschichte" suggests that we must concern ourselves with mere externals, then it is a poor name. By its very nature the new method seeks to approach the gospels from within, and to view them in relation to the Sitz im Leben from which they grew. Indeed, Flebig accuses Formgeschichte of concerning itself too much with content and not enough with literary form.¹ The chief need is to keep a sane balance between the two. However, the typical feature about Formgeschichte is that it studies the form first, and from the evidence thus obtained approaches the problem of evaluating

1. Flebig, FGJ, 9.

the content. Even the founder of the *formgeschichtlich* school, Martin Dibelius, has sometimes failed to observe this rule. The very word "legend" applied to certain items stamps them with a definite historical judgment before we have studied the form itself. We must be exceedingly careful with our terminology, and we must avoid prejudice. Only after the form has been analyzed are we within our rights in applying the results of that analysis to the material itself. Form critics have not always realized this. The task of this dissertation is to extend the *formgeschichtlich* method so as to render aid in verifying the historical element in the gospel story about Jesus.

There is essentially no conflict between form criticism and literary criticism. The former is only a specialization of the latter, just as form represents a specialized characteristic of any bit of literature. Hence, we shall study literary form most of all, but we shall find this impossible without allowing for certain broader aspects of the question. Study of the muscles could scarcely be separated from study of the mind and nervous system which control them.

It would be possible to analyze and list the form-units in a stereotyped way, without much reference to literary content. *Formgeschichte* has already suffered from an overdose of such treatment. As Cadbury has said, "The classifications are the least important part of the whole business".

If we seek to investigate the matter of historicity we must do more than classify the forms. We must study those forms in relation to their content, style, and setting in the gospel.

What has just been said may be expressed in another way, as follows: Formgeschichte is essentially a point of view. It is one facet of the literary diamond, just as so-called literary criticism and historical criticism are facets. Formgeschichte ought not to be compelled to stand alone, any more than so-called historical criticism can stand without recourse to literary criticism. Tools may always be used together -- not in isolation. Formgeschichte is a very definite tool -- in many respects unlike those already in the critic's possession. It does new things in new ways, but it works with the same materials, and sometimes must call upon other tools for aid. To make Formgeschichte our sole tool would be worse than folly. Yet, by its nature, there are some things it can best do alone. A firm grasp upon this principle will save much labor and trouble.

II. REVIEW OF PREVIOUS INVESTIGATION IN THE FIELD

A. History and development of Formgeschichte; its chief exponents.

As the student endeavors to trace the development of Formgeschichte, he is impressed by the lack of cohesion among those who purport to use the method. If the definition of Formgeschichte were carefully drawn, most of the books usually listed under a bibliography on the subject would have to be omitted. Many undertake a study of the gospels from the formgeschichtlich standpoint, but soon degenerate to a discussion of "strata of tradition" rather than literary form. Others, beginning with the study of literary form, almost immediately shift to a discussion of literary content. This shift is hard to avoid -- in fact, it might even be regarded as desirable, for there is no such thing as literary form without literary content. Thus a pure Formgeschichte is by definition almost impossible. If it could be carried through, the result would be like a row of empty tin cans with big labels on them. A certain measure of lenience is necessary as we approach the bibliography on the subject. Some who never saw the word "Formgeschichte" in a New Testament introduction were nearer to pure Formgeschichte than a few of those who purport to be solid adherents of the school.

We will see, in reviewing the available material in the field, that the influence of Formgeschichte upon our view of the historical Jesus has been a strangely neglected phase of the movement. Indeed, Fiebig and E. F. Scott are the only scholars thus far to consider the matter seriously, and their treatment is inadequate. The task of this chapter will be to give a critical review of all the literature on Formgeschichte, in order to establish a working basis for the specific problem before us.

After Bernard Weiss and H. J. Holtzmann had formulated the two-source theory and the general solution of the synoptic problem, a new school under the leadership of Wrede began to break with all academic authority and tradition. Wrede believed that Mark had good traditions, but in no sense could be said to have written history. He pointed out that Mark pictured Jesus even on earth as a supernatural being, recognized by the demons. Wrede's approach was full of exaggeration and often overshot his own mark.

As a contrast came the work of Johannes Weiss, a critic of Wrede, who made an exceedingly minute examination of the gospel materials. He found five main groups of material inherited and used by Mark: A. Traditions from Peter, including the passion story and about two hundred verses of miscellaneous material. B. Controversial and pedagogic dialogues. C. Sections with Q leanings. D. Sayings of Jesus, commonly viewed as

the Q collection. E. A few items of legendary origin and slight historical value. But Weiss definitely believed in the historic basis of Mark, especially in his method of picturing the Messianic consciousness of Jesus.

Naturally, neither Wrede nor Johannes Weiss approached Formgeschichte in the modern style. But their emphasis on isolating the traditions and identifying the various strands inherited by Mark did much to prepare for the distinctly formgeschichtlich approach.

1. Menzies.

In the first years of this century lived a scholar who came surprisingly near to modern Formgeschichte. Strangely enough, his name is not so much as mentioned by the standard authorities on Formgeschichte. In 1901 Allen Menzies wrote some three score pages of introduction to the main body of his book, The Earliest Gospel, wherein he stated almost every major thesis of the formgeschichtlich school. Without giving detailed descriptions of the forms, and without inventing a new terminology, he described the basic contentions which Formgeschichte has since announced. These included:

a. The recognition that the gospels (especially Mark) are not history for its own sake. "It (i.e., the gospel) is a spoken not a written thing; it is the spoken proclamation of God's will for man's salvation as made known in Jesus Christ".

He pointed out that Justin Martyr, in the middle of the second century, spoke of "Memoirs of the Apostles which are called Gospels",¹ and said that they were regularly read in Christian meetings.

b. Menzies stressed questions of historicity, and described the manner in which Old Testament forms were copied in the New Testament. He spoke of the poetic impulse of the Christian movement, and of a lengthy oral tradition. "Was there a period of oral transmission, when constant repetition tended to bring the narratives into a more suitable and more Perfect form....?"² He also stressed the primary importance of the passion story, and said that it was the earliest part of the gospel to receive its present form.

c. Anticipating the more recent argument from "needs and tendencies", Menzies mentioned "the strange fact that it was not a matter of pressing importance to the first Christians to be acquainted with the details of the life of Jesus on the earth".³ Although our own opinion is exactly opposite to this, Menzies agreed with many of the formgeschichtlich writers on the point. He felt that the earliest years required only a general knowledge of Jesus, perhaps such as some of the critics outline under the name of kerygma. Men were resolved, like Paul, "not to know Christ after the flesh". Only later did the need arise for knowledge of the historical

1. Apol. 1.66, 67.

2. Menzies, EG, 3.

3. Menzies, EG, 8.

Jesus, and then the accurate details had largely vanished. Although this view is incorrect, it shows that Menzies actually had a *Formgeschichte* of his own. While stressing that "It was in connection with practical matters that the Church first felt the importance of the Evangelical tradition",¹ Menzies was careful to avoid letting the notion of doctrinal influence obliterate the historicity of the gospel narrative. He viewed the synoptic material as essentially primitive and trustworthy. It grew up in answer to the early need for words of Jesus as material for instruction, standards for comparison, etc.. Some of the circumstances and needs which gave rise to the gospels were: A. Desire to know the origin of the Christian body and its characteristic features. B. The necessity to defend the church against attacks of opponents; an apologetic motive. C. The need for devotional literature suited to the faith. D. The historical interest which, while late, became rather acute. Admitting the late date of much of the gospel material, "It does not follow from this that the tradition was not built up on actual reminiscences at all, but owes its whole existence to the needs and the artistic faculties of the early Church".² That is, while Menzies made the error of viewing the historical matter as of little importance during the very earliest years, he avoided the

1. Menzies, EG, 11.

2. Menzies, EG, 18.

greater error of calling the gospel material a product of community imagination. He insisted on the actual historicity of Jesus. "The motives which act on the formation of tradition are one thing; the producing cause of the tradition and of the movement which carries it on is another thing. That there was in this case a producing cause, viz. the actual appearance of Jesus in Galilee, and that the tradition was formed on actual reminiscences of his life and acts and words is very certain."¹ This quotation summarizes two of the chief contentions of our own thesis, namely, that every religious program must begin with a personality, and that the so-called Sitz im Leben of the gospel material is best found in the life of Jesus himself.

d. Menzies supported the notion that the gospel circulated for a considerable time in small oral units. "In form the tradition consisted at this time of short pieces, some of course longer than others. Many contained sayings of the Master, an interview with a friendly or an unfriendly interlocutor leading up to a sentence which breaks upon the ear with unforgettable force and authority and brings the story to a close. In some cases several such incidents were held together by an old connection."² It is obvious from this quotation that Menzies had recognized the first tenets of Formgeschichte, even though he escaped the quibble over

1. Menzies, EG, 19.

2. Menzies, EG, 20.

terminology. He even anticipated the kernel of Schmidt's notable work when he wrote, "What was preserved in this way, however, were only so many isolated glimpses of the life of Jesus; the connections were for the most part lost. One had the incidents without dates or place or time"¹ -- or else with mere conventional phrases, used as connectives. In spite of this feature of the material, Menzies maintained that the apostles and their hearers preserved in the gospels a good idea of the general order of events. The place and original import of the sayings were often lost, but the sayings themselves were preserved, in appropriate though possibly unauthentic settings. (The gospels themselves show that such a condition existed. Why would Matthew compile his sayings, if he had known the settings for the individual portions?)

e. Menzies supported the notion of earlier written collections of gospel material. He felt that the close relationship between Matthew and Luke indicates more than a casual copying of Mark, namely, that they copied because they actually knew the same things recorded in Mark on a basis of older and trusted documents. Sometimes they corrected Mark on a basis of these documents -- otherwise, why did they not copy Mark entire and be done with the matter? Of these previous groupings the passion story was the oldest, though even here the agreement between the evangelists is more in order than

1. Menzies, EC, 20.

in actual wording. "Thus we know on the one hand that the tradition contains historical matter; and on the other that that matter was put in shape under an ideal impulse".¹

It was Menzies' opinion that Mark wrote a narrative gospel simply because he chose to write that kind of a book. He preferred to include as much action as possible. So far as we can definitely say, Mark was the first to make a connected story of the narrative bits, perhaps under the inspiration of material from Peter or from Alexander and Rufus. Menzies supports Mark's superiority in the question of general order, and indicates that his gospel shows growth and development in the following realms: A. The twelve are called gradually, not all at once. B. There is a growing interest in cures. C. There is a growing controversial element in Jesus' teaching. D. The Messianic claim is not made until late in the gospel.

It is evident from the above that Menzies was really a forerunner of Formgeschichte. Indeed, it is impossible to say just when Formgeschichte came into being. Some of its tenets are of such long standing that they are almost universally recognized. Others consist of a new approach to facts already recognized in some other connection. It is an error to consider that Formgeschichte began with Dibelius. It is also an error to trace it back to Schleiermacher and

1. Menzies, EG, 25.

beyond, as Fascher tries to do. Least of all should Formgeschichte be identified solely with attempts to classify the literary forms of the Gospel material. The classifications are at best a matter of convenience, a sort of stepping stone whereby we can reach a simpler view of the material itself.

It is apparent that a discussion of previous investigation in the field cannot be separated into logic-tight compartments. A perusal of the books in the formgeschichtlich field shows the surprising extent to which each scholar paraphrases all his forerunners in order -- then adds his original material in the last few pages! This is partly because the material has been approached from such a variety of angles that one's own contribution often takes the form of criticism directed toward one's predecessors.

2. Wellhausen.

Julius Wellhausen, in his commentaries on the gospels published in 1905 and following years, was more than anyone else the unwitting forerunner of Formgeschichte, because he stressed the necessity of distinguishing between the original tradition and the influence of the redactor. The success of his work on the pentateuchal documents led him to believe that a similar system might separate various literary strands in the gospels. He was so sceptical, however, that he denied all historical value to Q. He attributed these

sayings entirely to ecclesiastical origin, and left the impression that the teaching of Jesus was of a very fragmentary character, quite impossible for us to recover today. In this respect Bultmann borrowed a good deal from Wellhausen. He reversed the process, however, seeking to recover from the sayings that were preserved the ecclesiastical organization of the primitive Christian community. Bultmann makes the following remark about Wellhausen: "Especially important is Wellhausen's proof that also the sayings source, like Mark, is imbued with church theology."¹ This is exactly the conclusion which pleased Bultmann, and stimulated him to do the work which is especially obvious in Die Erforschung der synoptischen Evangelien.

R. H. Lightfoot outlines Wellhausen's suggestions about Mark as follows: "First, the book is largely made up of little narratives or sections, which at first had a separate existence, and were later joined together, not necessarily in their historical order, but often rather by similarity of theme.

"Secondly, the book has been subjected to revision, or revisions, before it reached its present form. Its contents belong to different stages of development.

"And thirdly, it has information to give, not only of the life of Jesus Christ, but also, to some extent, of beliefs

¹. Bultmann, EE, 11.

and circumstances of the early church, at the time when it was written."¹

Beginning with the above authors, the pursuit of sources and strata of tradition became the favorite indoor sport of New Testament scholarship. Emil Wendling² distinguished two original sources, to which he applied the titles of "apothegms" and "wonderstories" -- terms later adopted by Formgeschichte. Wendling thought Mark combined these sources quite unskillfully. In 1912 Paul Wendland published Primitive Christian Literary Forms, a good work on the general literary approach, but too full of theology-baiting in its treatment of Mark.

3. Dibelius.

The real birth of Formgeschichte came with the publication of Die Formgeschichte des Evangeliums, by Martin Dibelius. This book first appeared in 1919, with a second edition in 1933 (English translation, 1935). Critics had talked about the tendency of traditions to group themselves and to take certain forms, "but with Dibelius form-history is raised to the rank of a distinct discipline, with rules of its own that make it competent to pronounce not only literary but historical judgments".³ His purpose was two-

1. Lightfoot, HIG, 23.

2. Wendling, Primitive Mark, 1905.

3. Easton, GBG, 31.

fold: A. To explain the origin of the tradition about Jesus, and probe into the pre-gospel period. B. To make clear the real interest of the earliest tradition. In the mind of Dibelius this was always a missionary interest.

Since this book is one of the most important on Formgeschichte, and since it was the forerunner of the field, we shall consider it in some detail.

Dibelius demanded that we read by individual passages. The literary form becomes especially important as the author's personality becomes less important. The forms are both vehicles and creative forces; the form itself is responsible for additions from time to time, and is therefore more important than the literary intent of the compiler. Since the New Testament writings were fundamentally non-literary (in the sense that they were not for publication), Dibelius feels that they are especially suited to this type of criticism. The evangelists were not composers but compilers. Their materials already had characteristic literary forms, and it is in the light of these forms that we must read. Such was Dibelius' fundamental approach.

As information about Jesus spread abroad during the years 30 A.D. to 70 A.D., missionary enterprise was the cause and preaching was the method. This preaching naturally followed certain forms. For example, a study of Acts will show that the sermons of different characters are still very much alike, indicating that the author of Acts preferred to

follow the usual form, even though literary methods of the day did not frown upon invention. In this missionary preaching Dibelius finds three elements: A. Kerygma, or the positive message, the actual preaching about Jesus Christ (examples are found in Acts 2.22ff, 13.23ff). Partly in response to criticism, Dibelius has more recently broadened his concept of preaching to include various types of teaching and discussion within the community. B. Scriptural proof of statements about Jesus. C. Exhortation to repentance.

Paul, too, gives testimony to literary form in I Cor. 15.3-5, where he quotes a form he received from others: "For I delivered unto you first of all that which also I received: that Christ died for our sins according to the scriptures". Compare: I Cor. 11.2, "Now I praise you that ye remember me in all things, and hold fast the traditions, even as I delivered them to you"; I Cor. 11.23, "For I received of the Lord that which also I delivered unto you...."; also I Cor. 7.25, "Now concerning virgins I have no commandment of the Lord: but I give my judgment....". The latter case was one in which form and tradition offered the missionary no help. It is regrettable that Dibelius confines his interest so exclusively to the period of the gentile mission, practically denying the influence of any earlier work. He does admit the possibility of a partly-formed Aramaic tradition about Jesus,

1. Dibelius, Zur Formgeschichte der Evangelien, in Theologische Rundschau, 1929.

but the lack of any such material among the second-century Aramaic Christians in Syria seems to indicate that it was short-lived. Since the forms exist for us only in Greek, he believes that the transfer from Palestinian-Aramaic circles occurred very early. In this transfer the discourse material was better preserved than the narrative, although the passion story was probably the earliest of all. The latter conclusion is based upon Dibelius' interest in the mission motive, for which he thinks the passion narrative was the earliest essential. With it he combines paradigms (short illustrative incidents) and words of Jesus bearing on conduct, as the three earliest forms. But even in considering what appear to be our oldest forms, we must remember that they are already contaminated by a semi-literary presentation.

Dibelius defines a paradigm as "A short illustrative notice or story of an event, not more descriptive than is necessary to make the point for the sake of which it is introduced".¹ Of these he finds eight in the pure form, as follows: A. The healing of the paralytic, Mk. 2.1ff. B. The question of fasting, Mk. 2.18ff. C. Plucking ears of corn, Mk. 2.23ff. D. Restoring a withered hand, Mk. 3.1ff. E. The relatives of Jesus, Mk. 3.20ff, 30ff. F. Jesus blessing children, Mk. 10.13ff. G. The tribute money, Mk. 12.13ff. H. The anointing in Bethany, Mk. 14.3ff. He also lists ten

1. Dibelius, TG, xv.

others which are poorly preserved or otherwise doubtful.

The paradigms existed first in isolation, but when adapted to preaching there occurred an external rounding-off, indicated by editorial explanations, insufficient introductions, or sudden conclusions. In general Dibelius claims that the paradigms introduce types rather than persons, are brief and simple in their narrative, and are thoroughly religious in their coloring (sometimes with a didactic and unworldly style). It must be noted that in these cases historicity depends not upon remembrance by an eyewitness, but upon our recognition of the purity of a literary form. Yet, while the compiler loses his importance, we must always remember that the paradigm is a preaching form, and may be bent to serve the preacher's purpose. It lacks the objectivity and richness of the tales, but it has remarkable edifying power. It is characterized by brevity, simplicity, and a very naïve style. It was the preacher's most natural, most direct, and most powerful weapon.

Dibelius' second form is that of tales, or stories told primarily for their own sake. There were early Christian story-tellers who could tell a tale well -- a tale not created for preaching purposes nor repeated for missionary purposes, but for the pleasure of the narrative itself. Thus they had a greater breadth of view, more vivid description, and a more worldly outlook. It might be said that they had more literary "style", for their possibilities were much greater than the paradigms. They are not so simple, and therefore not so

easily defaced. Dibelius notes nine examples: A. The leper, Mk. 1.40-45. B. The storm, Mk. 4.35-41. C. The demons and swine, Mk. 5.1-20. D. Jairus' daughter and the woman with an issue, Mk. 5.21-43. E. The five thousand, Mk. 6.25-44. F. Walking on the sea, Mk. 6.45-52. G. The deaf and dumb man, Mk. 7.32-37. H. The blind man of Bethsaida, Mk. 8.22-26. I. The epileptic boy, Mk. 9.14-29. Luke has a good example of the "edited" tale in the story of the widow's son at Nain, Lk. 7.11ff. John, too, offers more or less edited tales in the marriage at Cana, Jn. 2.1ff, and the stories in 4.46ff, 5.1ff, 9.1ff, and 11.1ff.

It is characteristic of the tales that they are complete in themselves. The beginnings are preserved better than the endings, for the latter tend to accumulate additions of a pragmatic character. They are relatively longer and less didactic than the paradigms. There is a love for secular motives which make for a good story, with a corresponding lack of devotional motives. The tales are usually associated with miracles, and really constitute a form of the miracle narrative. That they are based upon fact is demonstrated by the pointed, non-didactic endings; e.g., "He said, Give her to eat", or "He spoke properly", or "He could see everything clearly". Especially noteworthy are the breadth of description and the vividness of detail; e.g., "Then arose a great wind and the waves beat upon the ship so that the ship was ready to sink". We see the five thousand sitting down

on green grass, and have a word picture of the baskets of refuse that were gathered up. Here is evidence of a writer who enjoyed his art!

The purpose of the tale was neither to preach nor to explain salvation, but to show the preëminence of the Lord Jesus and drive all other contestants from the field. For this reason the miracle was always confirmed. Its success was demonstrated. Dibelius thinks that the tales are paradigms which became lengthened and augmented with the miracle element. Thus they may be (but not necessarily) somewhat less historical. They are at least historical in so far as they witness to a development in the Christian community. They give testimony to the fact that they were preserved because of the faith of Christian believers.

The third form considered in From Tradition to Gospel is the legend, which is defined as "a narrative about some sainted person". "The term 'legend' does not in itself raise the question of historicity".¹ Self protection prompted Dibelius to add the latter phrase about historicity. As a matter of fact, the very term "legend" passes historical judgment the moment it is fixed to any unit of gospel material. Legend is by nature unhistorical, and it is impossible to divest the word of its true English meaning by any detour of definition. Easton is especially determined in his attack

1. Dibelius, TG, xv.

on these points, and says a good picture of the situation
 before that was given by the late Mr. [Name] of [Place].

the [Name] of [Place]

The [Name] of the [Place] was [Name] to [Name] [Name]
 [Name] [Name] [Name] [Name] [Name] [Name] [Name] [Name] [Name] [Name]
 [Name] [Name] [Name] [Name] [Name] [Name] [Name] [Name] [Name] [Name]
 [Name] [Name] [Name] [Name] [Name] [Name] [Name] [Name] [Name] [Name]

[Name] [Name] [Name] [Name] [Name] [Name] [Name] [Name] [Name] [Name]
 [Name] [Name] [Name] [Name] [Name] [Name] [Name] [Name] [Name] [Name]
 [Name] [Name] [Name] [Name] [Name] [Name] [Name] [Name] [Name] [Name]
 [Name] [Name] [Name] [Name] [Name] [Name] [Name] [Name] [Name] [Name]

[Name] [Name] [Name] [Name] [Name] [Name] [Name] [Name] [Name] [Name]
 [Name] [Name] [Name] [Name] [Name] [Name] [Name] [Name] [Name] [Name]
 [Name] [Name] [Name] [Name] [Name] [Name] [Name] [Name] [Name] [Name]

[Name] [Name] [Name] [Name] [Name] [Name] [Name] [Name] [Name] [Name]
 [Name] [Name] [Name] [Name] [Name] [Name] [Name] [Name] [Name] [Name]
 [Name] [Name] [Name] [Name] [Name] [Name] [Name] [Name] [Name] [Name]

[Name] [Name] [Name] [Name] [Name] [Name] [Name] [Name] [Name] [Name]
 [Name] [Name] [Name] [Name] [Name] [Name] [Name] [Name] [Name] [Name]
 [Name] [Name] [Name] [Name] [Name] [Name] [Name] [Name] [Name] [Name]

[Name] [Name] [Name] [Name] [Name] [Name] [Name] [Name] [Name] [Name]
 [Name] [Name] [Name] [Name] [Name] [Name] [Name] [Name] [Name] [Name]
 [Name] [Name] [Name] [Name] [Name] [Name] [Name] [Name] [Name] [Name]

[Name] [Name] [Name] [Name] [Name] [Name] [Name] [Name] [Name] [Name]
 [Name] [Name] [Name] [Name] [Name] [Name] [Name] [Name] [Name] [Name]
 [Name] [Name] [Name] [Name] [Name] [Name] [Name] [Name] [Name] [Name]

upon the use of "legend" to describe forms which may have every appearance of historicity. The best gospel example of legend is the story of Jesus' activities on the trip to Jerusalem when twelve years old, Lk. 2.41ff. Such a story must have originated in a circle where Jesus was thoroughly accepted as both teacher and Messiah, and was undoubtedly regarded by the teller as historical. However, the teller was usually not so interested in the miraculous element as in the edifying character of the hero himself. In the paradigm the edification came through the narrative or the event itself; in the legend the edification was found in the godly nature of the hero. Historicity was not the chief interest, either pro or con. Other examples of the legend form include: A. Jesus escaping from the crowd, Lk. 4.16-30. In this case the miraculous element of self-help is present, an element which is exceedingly common in non-Biblical analogies, but which is rarely met in the gospels. B. The miraculous draft of fishes, Lk. 5.1-11. C. The anointing, Lk. 7.36ff. D. The Peter-legend of walking on the water, Mt. 14.28ff. This is viewed by Dibelius as one of several legends directing attention toward the character of pious secondary persons instead of Jesus; that is, the legend concerns Peter most of all. E. The true Jesus-legends include the thankful Samaritan, Lk. 17.12-19, finding room for the last supper, Mk. 14.12-16, and the ass for the triumphal entry, Mk. 11.1-17. F. There are some embryonic legends which never

When the use of "legend" is desirable for any reason, every
 instance of legend should be clearly marked as such.
 In the case of legend, attention should be given to the fact

that the use of "legend" is not a matter of style.

Legend is a word which has been used in a variety of
 ways, and the word is used in a variety of ways.
 Legend is a word which has been used in a variety of

ways, and the word is used in a variety of ways.

Legend is a word which has been used in a variety of

ways, and the word is used in a variety of ways.

Legend is a word which has been used in a variety of

ways, and the word is used in a variety of ways.

Legend is a word which has been used in a variety of

ways, and the word is used in a variety of ways.

Legend is a word which has been used in a variety of

ways, and the word is used in a variety of ways.

Legend is a word which has been used in a variety of

ways, and the word is used in a variety of ways.

Legend is a word which has been used in a variety of

ways, and the word is used in a variety of ways.

Legend is a word which has been used in a variety of

ways, and the word is used in a variety of ways.

Legend is a word which has been used in a variety of

ways, and the word is used in a variety of ways.

Legend is a word which has been used in a variety of

ways, and the word is used in a variety of ways.

reached full development, e.g., the cursing of the fig tree, and the story of the fish with a coin in its mouth. The lack of development lies not in any incompleteness of the story, but in the brevity and unsatisfactory literary nature of the form. G. To this list must be added the birth legends in Matthew and Luke, the birth of John, legend of the virgin, announcement of the angels to the shepherds, the story of Simeon and Anna, and the coming of the Magi.

In summary: Paradigms have to do with the Christian missionary message as such; tales have to do with miracles; and legends put halos around men and set them in transfiguring light.

As we noted in the introduction, the discipline of *Formgeschichte* was first suggested by the application of similar methods to certain phases of Greek literature. Dibelius offers a chapter on analogies, both rabbinic and Greek. This will be considered at another point. However, the discussion of analogies is surprisingly fruitless so far as a better understanding of the gospel forms is concerned.

Dibelius regards the passion story as a single unit, from the plot against Jesus until the empty grave (except for the anointing in Bethany, which is a later insertion). Even John follows the general outline with care. Items such as the last supper¹ probably first circulated as individual stories,

1. Cf. I Cor. 11.23ff.

but were very early woven into the completed fabric as we now have it. By also excising the repetitions in Gethsamane and the denial of Peter, Dibelius feels that we can closely reproduce the original pre-Markan story. The chief purpose of this form-collection was to demonstrate that the passion of Jesus fulfilled the Old Testament and the will of God; that what appeared to be a historic shame was actually a plan for salvation. Thus the earliest passion records were not collected with a genuine biographical interest, but with a desire to show that the crucifixion took place in accord with God's will. The parting of garments, giving a drink, scoffing, and mishandling of Jesus were based on common Old Testament knowledge. Mark, according to Dibelius, changed this earliest passion form as follows: He prefixed the legend whereby the last supper became the Passover, replaced the appearance of Jesus to Peter by the legend of the empty grave, and mixed the motives in the scene before the Sanhedrin.

If the question of historicity is raised, Dibelius feels that the account of the betrayal and arrest is undoubtedly accurate. But the last supper is clouded by Luke's reference to two cups. Probably there were no Christian eyewitnesses involved in the account of the trial, and there are traces of an old legendary form in Peter's denial. Thus our best clue to historicity is found in a proper understanding of the Marcan version, though even here subjectivism is evident and

salvation-theology is freely mingled with fact.

Thus Dibelius concludes that our gospels are based on a multitude of originally independent sources. Mark was the first to work over these sources and make a synthesis. It was characteristic of Mark's work that he did not take over other accounts (as Matthew and Luke later took Mark), but worked directly from the traditional forms. Yet, even before Mark's time, many of these traditional units were naturally grouping themselves together. For example, in the sixth chapter of Mark the stories of walking on the water and feeding the five thousand are naturally held together by topographical factors. In joining together the disconnected units Mark used the following devices, according to Dibelius: A. He added incidental remarks and connectives. Often the connection is in the form of a geographical note, or a change of scene. B. He interpreted the tradition even as he reproduced it. The evangelist sometimes puts words directly into the mouth of Jesus, but he continually practices interpretation in bringing together similar incidents or pronouncements on similar subjects. C. As an editor, he developed satisfactory settings for passages such as the parables in chapter four. Here the scene is placed in a boat near the shore -- a distinctly editorial setting.

In answering the question, Why did Mark make such a synthesis? Dibelius gives the following suggestions: A. To show the Messianic secret of Jesus -- a point on which Dibelius

feels very strongly. B. He wished to write a book of secret epiphanies for religious purposes. C. He shared the desire to preserve the words of Jesus.

The last-named purpose leads Dibelius to the discussion of what he calls "exhortations" -- another body of material found in Q, which he believes both Matthew and Luke used in a Greek version. He abandons the possibility of reconstructing the source in any degree of fullness, viewing it as a stratum rather than a document. On the whole Dibelius tends to put more confidence in the exhortations than in the narratives. Such phrases as Mark 4.2, "And he taught them many things in parables", indicate that Mark considered the parables he reproduced as typical samples of a form commonly used by Jesus.

Dibelius approaches Jesus' discourse through the idea of "exhortations". In the time of Paul the sayings had already been collected for hortatory purposes.¹ The desire to know exactly what the Lord had said on a given point led to careful preservation of his exhortations. To this end Q was collected, for church use. Dibelius illustrates at length how the parables, for example, were eagerly scanned by the early church in an effort to extract from them as much exhortation as possible (a process which sometimes leaves undesirable marks of a community influence, tending to turn parables into

1. Cf. I Cor. 7.10, 9.14, 7.25. Such a collection Dibelius calls a parenesis, or moral code, collected for general Christian needs.

allegories). Matthew and Luke concluded the development along this line when they incorporated Q into their writings -- Luke using Q like a historian and Matthew like a compiler of exhortations on special themes. As more and more was written down, the river of tradition shrank. Words of exhortation gradually penetrated into descriptions and narration (a change of form often taking place in the process).

At first perusal Dibelius' work appears very extreme, as if to destroy the historicity of the entire gospel. But with all his doubts, Dibelius avoids the admission that mythology dominates the account. If we are right in saying that the foundation of the gospel tradition is based on preaching, then the story of Jesus is not of mythological origin, for the paradigms (our oldest witnesses) distinctly do not tell of a mythological hero. Myths are stories which in some fashion tell of the many-sided doings of the gods, but the paradigms present to us a teacher rather than a deity. The same may be said of the exhortations. Thus Dibelius pins his historical hopes upon a preservation of the words of Jesus, not upon the narrative. Indeed, Paul's portrayal of Christ coming to earth in divine form indicates that there was already a Christ-mythology in his time. But the gospels are comparatively free from this influence. The only really mythological narratives (according to Dibelius' definition) are the baptismal miracle, the temptations of Jesus, and the transfiguration. "Only to the smallest extent is the

tradition assembled in the Gospel of a mythological character and this is confined to the epiphany narratives and a few Tales".¹ This "smallest extent" is indicated by calling Jesus "Lord", and in such phrases as "I thank thee, O Father, that thou hast hidden...", etc.. It is a typical mark of the influence of Hellenistic religion. This mythological formulation never destroys the inherited content of the story. In contrast, John's gospel shows us that by his time the tradition had clearly entered into the realm of mythology. This will give us a hint as to the sequence of historical development.

Dibelius pictures the development thus: First of all there were simple, non-literary gospel forms existing in isolation and useful for preaching. The passion story was earliest of all. Then the technique of the tale developed, and miracle stories took on a secular character. Legendary narratives about leading persons attached themselves to the periphery of the tradition; instead of being strange to the world, Christianity began to accommodate its thought-forms to the world. Narratives and sayings of an unliterary nature gradually accumulated interpretations, and at last² came under complete control of the mythological element. If we know the forms we can recover the historical element on a basis of this development. Both tales and legends are unthinkable except as

1. Dibelius, TG, 279.

2. Cf. John.

based on some historical reality. Formgeschichte thus helps to discover the chief theological interests of early Christianity, namely, salvation, epiphany, and faith. Having discovered these, we can recover a small but dependable kernel of historical truth.

In his later works Dibelius has changed his point of view very little. He has expanded his method to include a corresponding approach to the entire New Testament. His Fresh Approach to the New Testament and Early Christian Literature is really a formgeschichtlich introduction to the New Testament, so far as such a thing is possible. In this book he stresses again that the New Testament writers were not literary men. Indeed, he tends to diminish the intelligence of the whole primitive community. He declares that the chief interest of the gospels is religious and missionary rather than literary; then he forthwith examines the material according to very exacting literary standards, and wonders why he is disappointed. "But the Christians themselves created the category of the Gospel as a new and characteristic form, a semi-literary development of an originally unliterary tradition".¹ Examples of the folk-features of the material are: A. The appeal to will rather than to reason; e.g., Lk. 18.9-14. B. "Epic repetition" of a speech or saying, and three-fold repetitions as in the parable of the talents. C. Word-pictures

1. Dibelius, ANT, 19.

of antithetical types; proverbs, parallelisms, and well known Old Testament quotations. "Thus the very form of the words used by Jesus contained the quality which made for their preservation".¹ In regard to the sayings, Dibelius' Fresh Approach to the New Testament and Early Christian Literature seems to represent a somewhat milder view than From Tradition to Gospel, and definitely maintains that the permanent shape of the tradition was cast along lines conditioned by the forms of speech which Jesus himself used. In regard to the narratives from Jesus' life, however, he throws all caution aside and says: "We can easily see why the words of Jesus were preserved in tradition, for they had a direct bearing upon the activity of the church. On the other hand it is not so easily apparent why the story of events in the life of Jesus should have been recounted. The eyewitnesses of this life were not writers, and we cannot presume that they had any desire to hand down a history of what they had seen".² This is not true. Would not primitive Christians be interested in the acts as well as the words of the Messiah? The chief contribution of the Fresh Approach to the New Testament and Early Christian Literature is in comparing the highly legendary character of the Gospel of Thomas and other apocryphal writings with the more restrained material of the canonical gospels.

1. Dibelius, ANT, 33.

2. Dibelius, ANT, 35.

of religious ideas, however, and will show
the religious position.

There are two forms of the religion
which are contained in the quality which we find in
the religious position.

The religion is in the New Testament and the Old Testament.

The religion is in the New Testament and the Old Testament.

The religion is in the New Testament and the Old Testament.

The religion is in the New Testament and the Old Testament.

The religion is in the New Testament and the Old Testament.

The religion is in the New Testament and the Old Testament.

The religion is in the New Testament and the Old Testament.

The religion is in the New Testament and the Old Testament.

The religion is in the New Testament and the Old Testament.

The religion is in the New Testament and the Old Testament.

The religion is in the New Testament and the Old Testament.

The religion is in the New Testament and the Old Testament.

The religion is in the New Testament and the Old Testament.

The religion is in the New Testament and the Old Testament.

The religion is in the New Testament and the Old Testament.

The religion is in the New Testament and the Old Testament.

The religion is in the New Testament and the Old Testament.

The religion is in the New Testament and the Old Testament.

The religion is in the New Testament and the Old Testament.

The religion is in the New Testament and the Old Testament.

The religion is in the New Testament and the Old Testament.

In Gospel Criticism and Christology Dibelius reaffirms his contention that the sole interest of early Christians was to win to salvation as many as possible within a short time. They had no desire to report the life of Jesus objectively. He confidently affirms that the early church had neither biographical nor historical interests. This is a highly arbitrary view, and loses sight of the fact that, whereas biography today tries to depict historical details of a man's life, the biographers of the first century were more interested in what kind of man he was and what his attitudes were. That they were not interested in our kind of biography does not mean they were poor biographers according to their own standards. Indeed, we shall repeatedly see that the gospels are just the kind of honest, straightforward biography that was loved in the first century. Gospel historicity depends upon whether or not the personality of Jesus is fairly recorded, even more than whether his deeds are fairly recorded. Dibelius loses sight of this fact. He writes, "Rather we must assume from the outset that everything spoken or recorded about Jesus, every tradition about his words and deeds, had some connection originally with the coming salvation".¹ In Gospel Criticism and Christology Dibelius reduces everything to terms of preaching, drives hair-splitting accusations at sentences which happen to use the same word twice, etc.. He sees everywhere

1. Dibelius, GCC, 17.

In General Criticism and Historical Criticism the author states that the sole interest of the historical critic is to ascertain the truth of the facts of history. He is not concerned with the moral or political value of the facts, nor with the character of the men who lived in the past. His only concern is to determine what actually happened. This is a very narrow view of the historical critic's task. The historical critic is also concerned with the interpretation of the facts. He is interested in the causes and consequences of the events, and in the significance of the events for the present. He is also interested in the character of the men who lived in the past, and in the values that they represent. The historical critic is not a passive observer of the past; he is an active participant in the process of historical inquiry. He is interested in the past as it is, but he is also interested in the past as it is understood by the present. He is interested in the past as a source of knowledge, but he is also interested in the past as a source of inspiration. The historical critic is a man of many interests, and his work is a complex and demanding one.

a dominant Christological tendency, trying to show that what happened was in accord with the will of God rather than to tell how it happened or what part Jesus played in it. Still, he purports to agree that somewhere in the vague forgotten background, quite out of touch with events in the active community, "the beginnings of the story of Jesus are not embedded in myth, but have their foundation in actual events". He argues that the Aramaic tradition died out very early, and that the narrative was largely Greek from its very birth. Those items which have good literary form he views as artificially concocted; those having bad form, as mutilated and unreliable. By this two-fisted process he is fairly successful in destroying the historicity of the entire tradition. "The individual pericopae were pearls put together to form a string. This was done in the preaching. The Christological teaching and preaching of the first communities is the thread which holds them together, which first makes their existence explicable".¹ This quotation is an excellent summary of the whole book.

Easton has made a very just criticism of Dibelius in The Gospel Before the Gospels. He points out two great errors: A. Dibelius assumes that we actually know what the early missionary practice was. This is by no means as simple as it appears, and there is danger of criticizing the gospel

1. Dibelius, GGC, 104.

a dominant historical fact tendency, trying to show that what
has passed was in accord with the will of God rather than to tell
how it happened, and that such a view is in fact, still, the
correct one. It is true that evidence in the various historical
backgrounds, with use of reason with events in the social
community, "the beginning of the story of Jesus are not
embodied in myth, but have their foundation in actual events."
It argues that the historical evidence does not vary early, and
that the narrative was largely given from the very first.
Those items which have been identified from the view as
reliably confirmed; those having had long, as mentioned and
unreliable. By this two-fold process it is fairly
suggested in describing the historical of the entire condition.
"The individual witnesses have been put together to form a
series. This and then in the preceding. The chronological
sequence and grouping of the first witnesses is the second
which holds them together, which first makes their evidence
reliable." This sequence is an essential element of
the whole work.
Gordon has made a very last chapter of evidence in
the General History and Society. He points out the errors
of: A. Historical evidence that is actually true and the
very distinctly historical fact. This is by no means an error
as it appears, and there is danger of mistaking the general

material upon the basis of one's prejudices about the extent and method of the gentile mission. We might well go beyond Easton on this point, and say it is a mistake to make the missionary interest the paramount motive for preserving the gospel materials. Early Christians did not preserve Jesus' words about conduct and the Kingdom of God merely to explain Christian methods to possible converts. They retained these items because of their fundamental interest in Jesus himself, because of the Jesus-element in their religious experience, and because they needed a definite guide to the new life they were trying to lead. We must recognize the need for parenesis on behalf of the Christian community itself, even more than for missionary purposes. B. Easton points out that the assumption the gospel material was determined by missionary practice is itself unwarranted.

Thus, after one has read Dibelius and given him due credit as founder of Formgeschichte -- after one has recognized a measure of validity in his emphasis upon the missionary element and the influence of group thinking, we are finally forced back to a consideration of the material itself as actually found in the gospels. If one wishes to follow Formgeschichte, he must not be an authoritarian. There is too much room for the subjective and the prejudicial. We can accept all the good suggestions of Dibelius, and still make a declaration of independence against the unnecessarily skeptical attitude which pervades his work.

Another criticism which can justly be leveled against Dibelius is his tendency to read historical judgment into his form classifications. Before Formgeschichte makes any suggestion about the historicity of a gospel item, it must analyze and classify it. It is obvious that Dibelius reverses the normal process when he establishes a classification of "myths". The very title "myth" casts a cloud of historical unreliability over the material. A myth is not a literary form -- it is a title involving historical judgment. Myths have no set form. They might be found as paradigms, tales, or miracle stories. The same is true of Dibelius' "legends". He invents his own highly technical definition for legend, and proposes that the word may be used to designate a form without reference to historical value. But as soon as he has made this highly arbitrary definition, he assumes that all the units listed in this classification are unhistorical merely because they are legends. In other words, he has followed himself around a circle. A "legend", in fact, does not have, and never can have, a definite and unchanging literary form. There are probably some true legends in the gospel material, especially in Matthew's stories about the angel descending to open the tomb,¹ the opening of graves,² darkness,³ and rending of the veil.⁴ These are legends, but they cannot be said to represent a legend

1. Mt. 28.2-4.

2. Mt. 27.52.

3. Mt. 27.45.

4. Mt. 27.51.

form. They are portions of narrative anecdotes, and our classification of their literary form ought not to put their historicity in unfavorable light. When it comes to a consideration of other groups such as epiphanies, cult-legends, etc., the whole list could better be classified as merely "stories". Dibelius' weakest spot lies in the terminology with which he undoubtedly thought he had strongly fortified himself.

4. Schmidt.

In 1919, coincident with Dibelius' notable work, K. L. Schmidt published Der Rahmen der Geschichte Jesu. The work deals largely with the connective material. Schmidt concludes that the gospels contain no chronological biography of Jesus, strictly speaking. Stress is laid upon the early circulation of the material in small independent units, which were later fitted together by means of an artificial framework. Most of the connective topographical or chronological material is dismissed as quite valueless. Only in rare cases when definite local color defines the location is there any basis for accepting a given connective element. "Much, which appears chronological and topographical, is only the framework, which was added to the isolated pictures".¹ The redeeming feature about this connective material is that it can be

1. Schmidt, RGJ, v.

four. They are portions of extensive manuscripts, and are
 classification of their literary form ought not to put their
 historical in watermarked light. When it comes to a
 consideration of other groups such as epistolary, auto-biography,
 etc., the whole list could better be classified as merely
 "literary." Historical sources and lies in the remaining
 also which are undoubtedly thought to have already furnished
 himself.

1. Schmidt.

In 1912, coincident with Schmidt's notable work
 E. A. Schmidt published Das Prinzip der geschichtlichen. The
 work deals largely with the connective material. Schmidt
 concludes that the groups contain no historical material
 of value, strongly asserting. There is laid upon the early
 classification of the material in small independent units, which
 were later fitted together by means of an artificial framework.
 Most of the connective topographical or chronological material
 is discarded as valueless. Only in rare cases when
 definite local notes define the location is there any basis
 for accepting a given connective element. "Then, when
 again chronological and topographical, is only the fragment,
 which was added to the isolated pieces." The remaining
 features about this connective material is that it can be

recognized. It gives itself away. The cultic and devotional elements are recognized as dominant. "In my opinion the importance of the early Christian cult, of the practice of public worship cannot be highly enough evaluated in the development of the gospel literature. The oldest Jesus-tradition is definitely cultish, hence pictorial and supra-historical".¹ Schmidt finds a complete lack of order in Mark, either logical or psychological. There is no development of Jesus or his disciples; there is no psychological motivation. A good sample is found in the impossibility of discovering the length of Jesus' ministry. On the other hand, Schmidt is occasionally willing to allow that the connective material is very old and perhaps genuine. An example is the closely-knit passage of Mark 1.14-45, where the order of events has no confirmation, yet the items rightly belong together and perhaps happened at the same time.

In regard to the parables, Schmidt notes the obvious, namely, that they are grouped according to titles or themes. Luke alone tends to let the parables stand as individual items, and to give them some appearance of historical order.

Schmidt's conclusion may be put thus: In matters of chronology and topography all popular or unliterary matter is subject to ready change. The gospel chronology consists of a sort of framework fitted over the material. The pre-synoptic

1. Schmidt, RGJ, vi.

tradition consisted of a number of individual stories, existing in short units so as to answer the needs of the church without taxing the memory. These were later grouped topically, with only enough chronological threads to hold them together. Many connectives are no more than a single word such as "and", "then", or "but". Others are "on that day", "at that time", etc.. Mark and Luke tried harder than Matthew to weave the short units into a historical continuity, and for this reason the gospel of Matthew enjoyed popular preference. It retained more of the disordered topical arrangement to which the people had become accustomed. Luke puts his items in the most acceptable historical locations, but this does not guarantee that they are the right locations. Luke was a good literary man, but not necessarily a historian. For example, according to Luke's travel plan Jesus seems always on the way to Jerusalem without ever getting there. He followed what he thought was good order, but the effort appears to have wearied him.

In Mark 10.45-13.37 Schmidt finds an obvious effort at chronology in telling of Jesus' last days. But even here we get into "inescapable difficulty"¹ if we try to view the order as historically accurate. For example, Luke omits the fig tree story, which is one of Mark's chief chronological items. Schmidt declares that "not once does this relative coherence exist and accordingly the whole thing falls apart into

1. Schmidt, RGJ, 275.

In the history of a number of individual studies, extending
 in extent only to the answer the needs of the author's
 family the history. These were later grouped logically, and
 only, except chronological studies to hold them together.
 Many connections are no more than a single word such as "and",
 "then", or "but". Others are "at that time", "at that place",
 etc. Some and this kind of thing seem to serve the
 author while they are historical connections, and for this reason
 the subject of history is not a regular first volume. It is placed
 next to the chronological logical arrangement in which the people
 are placed in order. This puts the items in the order
 necessary for historical connections, and this then has historical
 that they are the right connections. This was a good library
 and, and not necessarily a historical. For example, according
 to the author's plan these items must always be the way to be placed
 without ever getting there. He followed what he thought was
 good order, and he never seems to have worried about
 in most 10-15-17-19-21-23-25-27-29-31-33-35-37-39-41-43-45-47-49-51-53-55-57-59-61-63-65-67-69-71-73-75-77-79-81-83-85-87-89-91-93-95-97-99-101-103-105-107-109-111-113-115-117-119-121-123-125-127-129-131-133-135-137-139-141-143-145-147-149-151-153-155-157-159-161-163-165-167-169-171-173-175-177-179-181-183-185-187-189-191-193-195-197-199-201-203-205-207-209-211-213-215-217-219-221-223-225-227-229-231-233-235-237-239-241-243-245-247-249-251-253-255-257-259-261-263-265-267-269-271-273-275-277-279-281-283-285-287-289-291-293-295-297-299-301-303-305-307-309-311-313-315-317-319-321-323-325-327-329-331-333-335-337-339-341-343-345-347-349-351-353-355-357-359-361-363-365-367-369-371-373-375-377-379-381-383-385-387-389-391-393-395-397-399-401-403-405-407-409-411-413-415-417-419-421-423-425-427-429-431-433-435-437-439-441-443-445-447-449-451-453-455-457-459-461-463-465-467-469-471-473-475-477-479-481-483-485-487-489-491-493-495-497-499-501-503-505-507-509-511-513-515-517-519-521-523-525-527-529-531-533-535-537-539-541-543-545-547-549-551-553-555-557-559-561-563-565-567-569-571-573-575-577-579-581-583-585-587-589-591-593-595-597-599-601-603-605-607-609-611-613-615-617-619-621-623-625-627-629-631-633-635-637-639-641-643-645-647-649-651-653-655-657-659-661-663-665-667-669-671-673-675-677-679-681-683-685-687-689-691-693-695-697-699-701-703-705-707-709-711-713-715-717-719-721-723-725-727-729-731-733-735-737-739-741-743-745-747-749-751-753-755-757-759-761-763-765-767-769-771-773-775-777-779-781-783-785-787-789-791-793-795-797-799-801-803-805-807-809-811-813-815-817-819-821-823-825-827-829-831-833-835-837-839-841-843-845-847-849-851-853-855-857-859-861-863-865-867-869-871-873-875-877-879-881-883-885-887-889-891-893-895-897-899-901-903-905-907-909-911-913-915-917-919-921-923-925-927-929-931-933-935-937-939-941-943-945-947-949-951-953-955-957-959-961-963-965-967-969-971-973-975-977-979-981-983-985-987-989-991-993-995-997-999-1001-1003-1005-1007-1009-1011-1013-1015-1017-1019-1021-1023-1025-1027-1029-1031-1033-1035-1037-1039-1041-1043-1045-1047-1049-1051-1053-1055-1057-1059-1061-1063-1065-1067-1069-1071-1073-1075-1077-1079-1081-1083-1085-1087-1089-1091-1093-1095-1097-1099-1101-1103-1105-1107-1109-1111-1113-1115-1117-1119-1121-1123-1125-1127-1129-1131-1133-1135-1137-1139-1141-1143-1145-1147-1149-1151-1153-1155-1157-1159-1161-1163-1165-1167-1169-1171-1173-1175-1177-1179-1181-1183-1185-1187-1189-1191-1193-1195-1197-1199-1201-1203-1205-1207-1209-1211-1213-1215-1217-1219-1221-1223-1225-1227-1229-1231-1233-1235-1237-1239-1241-1243-1245-1247-1249-1251-1253-1255-1257-1259-1261-1263-1265-1267-1269-1271-1273-1275-1277-1279-1281-1283-1285-1287-1289-1291-1293-1295-1297-1299-1301-1303-1305-1307-1309-1311-1313-1315-1317-1319-1321-1323-1325-1327-1329-1331-1333-1335-1337-1339-1341-1343-1345-1347-1349-1351-1353-1355-1357-1359-1361-1363-1365-1367-1369-1371-1373-1375-1377-1379-1381-1383-1385-1387-1389-1391-1393-1395-1397-1399-1401-1403-1405-1407-1409-1411-1413-1415-1417-1419-1421-1423-1425-1427-1429-1431-1433-1435-1437-1439-1441-1443-1445-1447-1449-1451-1453-1455-1457-1459-1461-1463-1465-1467-1469-1471-1473-1475-1477-1479-1481-1483-1485-1487-1489-1491-1493-1495-1497-1499-1501-1503-1505-1507-1509-1511-1513-1515-1517-1519-1521-1523-1525-1527-1529-1531-1533-1535-1537-1539-1541-1543-1545-1547-1549-1551-1553-1555-1557-1559-1561-1563-1565-1567-1569-1571-1573-1575-1577-1579-1581-1583-1585-1587-1589-1591-1593-1595-1597-1599-1601-1603-1605-1607-1609-1611-1613-1615-1617-1619-1621-1623-1625-1627-1629-1631-1633-1635-1637-1639-1641-1643-1645-1647-1649-1651-1653-1655-1657-1659-1661-1663-1665-1667-1669-1671-1673-1675-1677-1679-1681-1683-1685-1687-1689-1691-1693-1695-1697-1699-1701-1703-1705-1707-1709-1711-1713-1715-1717-1719-1721-1723-1725-1727-1729-1731-1733-1735-1737-1739-1741-1743-1745-1747-1749-1751-1753-1755-1757-1759-1761-1763-1765-1767-1769-1771-1773-1775-1777-1779-1781-1783-1785-1787-1789-1791-1793-1795-1797-1799-1801-1803-1805-1807-1809-1811-1813-1815-1817-1819-1821-1823-1825-1827-1829-1831-1833-1835-1837-1839-1841-1843-1845-1847-1849-1851-1853-1855-1857-1859-1861-1863-1865-1867-1869-1871-1873-1875-1877-1879-1881-1883-1885-1887-1889-1891-1893-1895-1897-1899-1901-1903-1905-1907-1909-1911-1913-1915-1917-1919-1921-1923-1925-1927-1929-1931-1933-1935-1937-1939-1941-1943-1945-1947-1949-1951-1953-1955-1957-1959-1961-1963-1965-1967-1969-1971-1973-1975-1977-1979-1981-1983-1985-1987-1989-1991-1993-1995-1997-1999-2001-2003-2005-2007-2009-2011-2013-2015-2017-2019-2021-2023-2025-2027-2029-2031-2033-2035-2037-2039-2041-2043-2045-2047-2049-2051-2053-2055-2057-2059-2061-2063-2065-2067-2069-2071-2073-2075-2077-2079-2081-2083-2085-2087-2089-2091-2093-2095-2097-2099-2101-2103-2105-2107-2109-2111-2113-2115-2117-2119-2121-2123-2125-2127-2129-2131-2133-2135-2137-2139-2141-2143-2145-2147-2149-2151-2153-2155-2157-2159-2161-2163-2165-2167-2169-2171-2173-2175-2177-2179-2181-2183-2185-2187-2189-2191-2193-2195-2197-2199-2201-2203-2205-2207-2209-2211-2213-2215-2217-2219-2221-2223-2225-2227-2229-2231-2233-2235-2237-2239-2241-2243-2245-2247-2249-2251-2253-2255-2257-2259-2261-2263-2265-2267-2269-2271-2273-2275-2277-2279-2281-2283-2285-2287-2289-2291-2293-2295-2297-2299-2301-2303-2305-2307-2309-2311-2313-2315-2317-2319-2321-2323-2325-2327-2329-2331-2333-2335-2337-2339-2341-2343-2345-2347-2349-2351-2353-2355-2357-2359-2361-2363-2365-2367-2369-2371-2373-2375-2377-2379-2381-2383-2385-2387-2389-2391-2393-2395-2397-2399-2401-2403-2405-2407-2409-2411-2413-2415-2417-2419-2421-2423-2425-2427-2429-2431-2433-2435-2437-2439-2441-2443-2445-2447-2449-2451-2453-2455-2457-2459-2461-2463-2465-2467-2469-2471-2473-2475-2477-2479-2481-2483-2485-2487-2489-2491-2493-2495-2497-2499-2501-2503-2505-2507-2509-2511-2513-2515-2517-2519-2521-2523-2525-2527-2529-2531-2533-2535-2537-2539-2541-2543-2545-2547-2549-2551-2553-2555-2557-2559-2561-2563-2565-2567-2569-2571-2573-2575-2577-2579-2581-2583-2585-2587-2589-2591-2593-2595-2597-2599-2601-2603-2605-2607-2609-2611-2613-2615-2617-2619-2621-2623-2625-2627-2629-2631-2633-2635-2637-2639-2641-2643-2645-2647-2649-2651-2653-2655-2657-2659-2661-2663-2665-2667-2669-2671-2673-2675-2677-2679-2681-2683-2685-2687-2689-2691-2693-2695-2697-2699-2701-2703-2705-2707-2709-2711-2713-2715-2717-2719-2721-2723-2725-2727-2729-2731-2733-2735-2737-2739-2741-2743-2745-2747-2749-2751-2753-2755-2757-2759-2761-2763-2765-2767-2769-2771-2773-2775-2777-2779-2781-2783-2785-2787-2789-2791-2793-2795-2797-2799-2801-2803-2805-2807-2809-2811-2813-2815-2817-2819-2821-2823-2825-2827-2829-2831-2833-2835-2837-2839-2841-2843-2845-2847-2849-2851-2853-2855-2857-2859-2861-2863-2865-2867-2869-2871-2873-2875-2877-2879-2881-2883-2885-2887-2889-2891-2893-2895-2897-2899-2901-2903-2905-2907-2909-2911-2913-2915-2917-2919-2921-2923-2925-2927-2929-2931-2933-2935-2937-2939-2941-2943-2945-2947-2949-2951-2953-2955-2957-2959-2961-2963-2965-2967-2969-2971-2973-2975-2977-2979-2981-2983-2985-2987-2989-2991-2993-2995-2997-2999-3001-3003-3005-3007-3009-3011-3013-3015-3017-3019-3021-3023-3025-3027-3029-3031-3033-3035-3037-3039-3041-3043-3045-3047-3049-3051-3053-3055-3057-3059-3061-3063-3065-3067-3069-3071-3073-3075-3077-3079-3081-3083-3085-3087-3089-3091-3093-3095-3097-3099-3101-3103-3105-3107-3109-3111-3113-3115-3117-3119-3121-3123-3125-3127-3129-3131-3133-3135-3137-3139-3141-3143-3145-3147-3149-3151-3153-3155-3157-3159-3161-3163-3165-3167-3169-3171-3173-3175-3177-3179-3181-3183-3185-3187-3189-3191-3193-3195-3197-3199-3201-3203-3205-3207-3209-3211-3213-3215-3217-3219-3221-3223-3225-3227-3229-3231-3233-3235-3237-3239-3241-3243-3245-3247-3249-3251-3253-3255-3257-3259-3261-3263-3265-3267-3269-3271-3273-3275-3277-3279-3281-3283-3285-3287-3289-3291-3293-3295-3297-3299-3301-3303-3305-3307-3309-3311-3313-3315-3317-3319-3321-3323-3325-3327-3329-3331-3333-3335-3337-3339-3341-3343-3345-3347-3349-3351-3353-3355-3357-3359-3361-3363-3365-3367-3369-3371-3373-3375-3377-3379-3381-3383-3385-3387-3389-3391-3393-3395-3397-3399-3401-3403-3405-3407-3409-3411-3413-3415-3417-3419-3421-3423-3425-3427-3429-3431-3433-3435-3437-3439-3441-3443-3445-3447-3449-3451-3453-3455-3457-3459-3461-3463-3465-3467-3469-3471-3473-3475-3477-3479-3481-3483-3485-3487-3489-3491-3493-3495-3497-3499-3501-3503-3505-3507-3509-3511-3513-3515-3517-3519-3521-3523-3525-3527-3529-3531-3533-3535-3537-3539-3541-3543-3545-3547-3549-3551-3553-3555-3557-3559-3561-3563-3565-3567-3569-3571-3573-3575-3577-3579-3581-3583-3585-3587-3589-3591-3593-3595-3597-3599-3601-3603-3605-3607-3609-3611-3613-3615-3617-3619-3621-3623-3625-3627-3629-3631-3633-3635-3637-3639-3641-3643-3645-3647-3649-3651-3653-3655-3657-3659-3661-3663-3665-3667-3669-3671-3673-3675-3677-3679-3681-3683-3685-3687-3689-3691-3693-3695-3697-3699-3701-3703-3705-3707-3709-3711-3713-3715-3717-3719-3721-3723-3725-3727-3729-3731-3733-3735-3737-3739-3741-3743-3745-3747-3749-3751-3753-3755-3757-3759-3761-3763-3765-3767-3769-3771-3773-3775-3777-3779-3781-3783-3785-3787-3789-3791-3793-3795-3797-3799-3801-3803-3805-3807-3809-3811-3813-3815-3817-3819-3821-3823-3825-3827-3829-3831-3833-3835-3837-3839-3841-3843-3845-3847-3849-3851-3853-3855-3857-3859-3861-3863-3865-3867-3869-3871-3873-3875-3877-3879-3881-3883-3885-3887-3889-3891-3893-3895-3897-3899-3901-3903-3905-3907-3909-3911-3913-3915-3917-3919-3921-3923-3925-3927-3929-3931-3933-3935-3937-3939-3941-3943-3945-3947-3949-3951-3953-3955-3957-3959-3961-3963-3965-3967-3969-3971-3973-3975-3977-3979-3981-3983-3985-3987-3989-3991-3993-3995-3997-3999-4001-4003-4005-4007-4009-4011-4013-4015-4017-4019-4021-4023-4025-4027-4029-4031-4033-4035-4037-4039-4041-4043-4045-4047-4049-4051-4053-4055-4057-4059-4061-4063-4065-4067-4069-4071-4073-4075-4077-4079-4081-4083-4085-4087-4089-4091-4093-4095-4097-4099-4101-4103-4105-4107-4109-4111-4113-4115-4117-4119-4121-4123-4125-4127-4129-4131-4133-4135-4137-4139-4141-4143-4145-4147-4149-4151-4153-4155-4157-4159-4161-4163-4165-4167-4169-4171-4173-4175-4177-4179-4181-4183-4185-4187-4189-4191-4193-4195-4197-4199-4201-4203-4205-4207-4209-4211-4213-4215-4217-4219-4221-4223-4225-4227-4229-4231-4233-4235-4237-4239-4241-4243-4245-4247-4249-4251-4253-4255-4257-4259-4261-4263-4265-4267-4269-4271-4273-4275-4277-4279-4281-4283-4285-4287-4289-4291-4293-4295-4297-4299-4301-4303-4305-4307-4309-4311-4313-4315-4317-4319-4321-4323-4325-4327-4329-4331-4333-4335-4337-4339-4341-4343-4345-4347-4349-4351-4353-4355-4357-4359-4361-4363-4365-4367-4369-4371-4373-4375-4377-4379-4381-4383-4385-4387-4389-4391-4393-4395-4397-4399-4401-4403-4405-4407-4409-4411-4413-4415-4417-4419-4421-4423-4425-4427-4429-4431-4433-4435-4437-4439-4441-4443-4445-4447-4449-4451-4453-4455-4457-4459-4461-4463-4465-4467-4469-4471-4473-4475-4477-4479-4481-4483-4485-4487-4489-4491-4493-4495-4497-4499-4501-4503-4505-4507-4509-4511-4513-4515-4517-4519-4521-4523-4525-4527-4529-4531-4533-4535-4537-4539-4541-4543-4545-4547-4549-4551-4553-4555-4557-4559-4561-4563-4565-4567-4569-4571-4573-4575-4577-4579-4581-4583-4585-4587-4589-4591-4593-4595-4597-4599-4601-4603-4605-4607-4609-4611-4613-4615-4617-4619-4621-4623-4625-4627-4629-4631-4633-4635-4637-4639-4641-4643-4645-4647-4649-4651-4653-4655-4657-4659-4661-4663-4665-4667-4669-4671-4673-4675-4677-4679-4681-4683-4685-4687-4689-4691-4693-4695-4697-4699-4701-4703-4705-4707-4709-4711-4713-4715-4717-4719-4721-4723-4725-4727-4729-4731-4733-4735-4737-4739-4741-4743-4745-4747-4749-4751-4753-4755-4757-4759-4761-4763-4765-4767-4769-4771-4773-4775-4777-4779-4781-4783-4785-4787-4789-4791-4793-4795-4797-4799-4801-4803-4805-4807-4809-4811-4813-4815-4817-4819-4821-4823-4825-4827-4829-4831-4833-4835-4837-4839-4841-4843-4845-4847-4849-4851-4853-4855-4857-4859-4861-4863-4865-4867-4869-4871-4873-4875-4877-4879-4881-4883-4885-4887-4889-4891-4893-4895-4897-4899-4901-4903-4905-4907-4909-4911-4913-4915-4917-4919-4921-4923-4925-4927-4929-4931-4933-4935-4937-4939-4941-4943-4945-4947-4949-4951-4953-4955-4957-4959-4961-4963-4965-4967-4969-4971-4973-4975-4977-4979-4981-4983-4985-4987-4989-4991-4993-4995-4997-4999-5001-5003-5005-5007-5009-5011-5013-5015-5017-5019-5021-5023-5025-5027-5029-5031-5033-5035-5037-5039-5041-

individual stories".¹

It is further observed that: A. Matthew's editorial settings have more definiteness than those of Mark, though often copied from Mark. B. Many items have no localization at all, e.g., Mk. 12.1-12. On the other hand, a great many are localized.

Schmidt concludes that the entire report about Jesus has no chronological or topographical framework which can be regarded as historical. Only in the passion story is there trustworthy information about time and place. Here the evangelists had before them a definite story. The passion items are not like those in the rest of the gospel. The latter could circulate as isolated units, and still not lack in beauty or dignity. But the passion items must exist together or they lose their significance. They have value only in mutual relation to one another. Hence the passion story was the earliest to receive definite connected form, and probably was formulated shortly after the events. Schmidt puts the passion narrative on an entirely different plane from the other items. He sees in it "especially high, direct historical worth".²

Thus most of the gospel material consists of individual items, strung together on a "sachlichen" basis and often contaminated with religious, apologetic, and missionary interests.

1. Schmidt, RGJ, 281.
2. Schmidt, RGJ, 306.

"Luke belongs also in this process, but he is the one evangelist who had beyond this a higher literary aspiration".¹ In early days Matthew was the most popular gospel because it followed the topical (sachlich) grouping of items. Mark still exhibits the ruins of an itinerary. Luke tried to recapture and improve this aspect of the material; Matthew abandoned it in favor of his own topical arrangement.

At rare intervals there is an authentic touch of local or chronological color. "But on the whole there is no life of Jesus in the sense of a developing life-history, no chronological sketch of the history of Jesus, but only individual stories, pericopes, which are placed in a framework".²

We ought not to be overly discouraged by Schmidt's negative results. Even though his rejection of the gospel outline is radical, his treatment of the material itself is fairly conservative. We must remember that the individual pericopes, by themselves, can have vast historical value apart from whether they are in exact order. Indeed, since Schmidt has concerned himself almost entirely with chronological detail, it may justly be said that he has concerned himself with a triviality. History is more than an order of events, and a narrative may be perfectly good history even if the order is sometimes confused. Such confusion by no means denies that the thing actually happened. Probably the evangelists used

1. Schmidt, RGJ, 317.

2. Schmidt, RGJ, 317.

all the information they had available along this line. What historian could do more? Do not modern historians often guess at the order of events, or even build up a psychological framework when facts are missing? Schmidt makes demands of the evangelists that were not natural to their time or place, and which can rarely be satisfied by modern historians working under ideal conditions. When he allows that the passion story is essentially in reliable order, let us not forget that he is talking about twenty-five to fifty per cent of each gospel. This is no small part. Moreover, it is obvious to any one that the gospel materials are in a sort of general historical order -- birth, youth, public work, opposition, death, and resurrection. This is about all we need. Schmidt's work has clarified the issue, and has dissuaded us from trying to authenticate every bit of the evangelists' order. This would be impossible, since they disagree among themselves. But Schmidt has, if anything, increased our trust in the historicity of the individual pericopes because he has demonstrated their great age, reaching back far behind the time of gospel compilations. Especially important is his contention that both the individual and the community would tend to preserve the material in short units, easy to remember. Even when the compilers freely altered the framework, they left the pericopes essentially unchanged. They were part of the established tradition, based upon fact, which no one wanted to change. Schmidt went a long way toward

preparing the trail over which this thesis must go. A biographer approaches his work with a point of view, a theory. But popular tradition often comes nearer the truth by telling a story simply, just as things were seen and heard.

5. Albertz.

In 1921 Martin Albertz made a distinct contribution to the literature of Formgeschichte with Die synoptischen Streitgespräche. In the introduction he contrasts his own method with that of Bultmann in these words: "The methodical starting point is not for him, as it is for me, the analysis of the material before us, but rather an artistic conception of Hellenistic literary history, which is forced upon an unliterary and fundamentally Jewish form of expression, namely that of the apothegm".¹ In contrast, Albertz looked for the *Sitz im Leben* of the gospel material in actual conversations between Jesus and his neighbors, or else in the disputes of the very earliest church groups. He found a clue to the gospel literature in the personal controversy of Jesus with his enemies. This realization on the part of Albertz was a great forward step -- though withal a simple and almost self-apparent one. He recognized that the controversies have their valid *Sitz im Leben* in the historical life of Jesus, thus preparing the way for our own contention that practically all the gospel material can be given a similar *Sitz im Leben*.

1. Albertz, S, vi.

Albertz stresses the fact that Jesus himself was unlitrary, even though artistic in his methods. The literary-historical approach to his words is a fundamental error; the form-historical approach is the normal method. Thus viewed, the controversies become units of real importance. "There can be no doubt that the controversies appear to have belonged together in the early Christian tradition just the same as the parables".¹ Accordingly, Albertz singles out for discussion the following collections of controversies in Mark:

a. A collection of Galilean controversies, Mk. 2.1-3.6.²

"This collection does not originate with Mark".³ Its purpose is to explain the necessity for Jesus' death by reviewing the historical conflicts between Jesus and his opponents. The form-units are built along normal lines, including an expository setting, the statement of a question, and the final answer of Jesus. Only the high spots are touched, and the forms have a decidedly Jewish appearance.

b. A collection of Jerusalem controversies, Mk. 11.15-17, 27-33; 12.13-40.⁴ "Originally the objective (sachliche) principle and not the temporal principle determined the order of the material".⁵ The material is held together by the setting in the temple, and by the fact that the same fundamental

1. Albertz, S, 2.

2. Mt. 9.1-17; 12.1-14; Lk. 5.17-6.11.

3. Albertz, S, 5.

4. Mt. 21.12f, 23-27; 22.15-46; Lk. 10.45f; 20.1-8, 20-47.

5. Albertz, S, 16.

conflict runs all the way through. This is Jesus' final conflict with the Jewish leaders. It is the age-old Jewish conflict of prophet against priest, again becoming acute through the work of John and Jesus. The compiler did an artistic job here, the presentation of the questions being somewhat richer and freer than in the former collection, and the compiler's influence being more discernible. Matthew and Luke show somewhat greater schematic influence. "Above all, there stand behind the narratives conversations that were actually held. They belong among the most trustworthy of what the gospel hands down. Their localization in the temple is probable, their temporal setting obscure. The order is sachlich,² being for the first time in Matthew meant as temporal and placed in definite connection on one day".³ There is a notable lack of connective material, simply because it was not needed. The items, at first recounted separately, early fell together as a compilation because of their natural affinity.

c. Controversies about the obligation to maintain⁴ rabbinic tradition, Mk. 7.1-23. Matthew's inversion of Mark's order, plus Mark's interest in informing gentile readers about the moral significance of pure and impure, indicate a text not so pure as in the previous examples. We can see a tendency to make the material catechetical in style.

d. A controversy on divorce, Mk. 10.2-12.⁵ The rule

1. Albertz, S, 26.

2. I.e., topical, or objective.

3. Albertz, S, 35.

4. Mt. 15.1-20.

5. Mt. 19.3-12.

given is notably universal, such as the church would be most likely to preserve.

e. The triple controversy of Jesus with Satan, Mt. 4.1-11.¹ Albertz views this as one of the most important passages in the New Testament, and parallels it in material from other religions, especially Buddhism. "Jesus' private experiences with Satan certainly are equally genuine and private as those of Luther. Their narrative is the best told and most profound controversy in the Gospels".²

The following are non-temptation controversies, concerned with the demoniac origin of Jesus' healing power:

f. Mk. 3.22-30.³ Both Mark and Q are involved in these passages, the latter being more inclusive, and representing the fundamental text. These passages have a simpler form, and lack the attitude of malicious temptation which characterized the previous examples.

g. Demand for a Messianic sign, Mk. 8.11-13.⁴ Albertz doubts this pericope more than any other among the controversies. He feels that Mark redacted extensively.

h. The rich ruler, Mk. 10.17-27.⁵ In the course of tradition this became part of a catechism on Jesus' teaching about riches.

i. Discussion with John about the "coming one", Mt. 11.2-6.⁶

1. Lk. 4.1-12.

2. Albertz, S, 48.

3. Mt. 9.32-34; 12.22-32; Lk. 11.14-23.

4. Mt. 16.1-4; 12.38-42; Lk. 11.16, 29-32.

5. Mt. 19.19-26; Lk. 18.18-27.

6. Lk. 7.18-21.

given is usually answered, such as the church would be most

likely to preserve.

c. The triple controversy of Jesus with Satan, Mt. 4:1-11

Alfred Allen calls this one of the most important passages in the

New Testament, and perhaps it is in contrast to other religions,

especially Buddhism, "Jesus' private experiences with Satan

certainly are equally genuine and private as those of Luther.

Their narrative is the best and most profound controversy

in the Gospel.

The following are non-biblical controversies, connected

with the essential crisis of Jesus' healing power:

1. Mt. 12:22-32. Both Mark and L are involved in these

passages, the latter being more incisive, and representing the

fundamental point. These passages have a singular force, and

lack the richness of religious speculation which characterized

the previous examples.

d. Demand for a Messiah's sign, Mt. 12:38-42. Allegory

Under this passage there is no other among the controversies.

He feels that have reached extensively.

h. The rich man, Mt. 19:16-22. In the course of

Jesus' life he has part of a definition on Jesus' teaching

about riches.

i. Discussion with John about the "coming one", Mt. 11:2-6.

1. Lk. 9:1-17
2. Lk. 9:18-22
3. Lk. 9:23-25
4. Lk. 9:26-28
5. Lk. 9:29-31
6. Lk. 9:32-34
7. Lk. 9:35-38
8. Lk. 9:39-42
9. Lk. 9:43-45
10. Lk. 9:46-48
11. Lk. 9:49-50
12. Lk. 9:51-53
13. Lk. 9:54-56
14. Lk. 9:57-59
15. Lk. 9:60-62
16. Lk. 9:63-65
17. Lk. 9:66-68
18. Lk. 9:69-71
19. Lk. 9:72-74
20. Lk. 9:75-77
21. Lk. 9:78-80
22. Lk. 9:81-83
23. Lk. 9:84-86
24. Lk. 9:87-89
25. Lk. 9:90-92
26. Lk. 9:93-95
27. Lk. 9:96-98
28. Lk. 9:99-101
29. Lk. 9:102-104
30. Lk. 9:105-107
31. Lk. 9:108-110
32. Lk. 9:111-113
33. Lk. 9:114-116
34. Lk. 9:117-119
35. Lk. 9:120-122
36. Lk. 9:123-125
37. Lk. 9:126-128
38. Lk. 9:129-131
39. Lk. 9:132-134
40. Lk. 9:135-137
41. Lk. 9:138-140
42. Lk. 9:141-143
43. Lk. 9:144-146
44. Lk. 9:147-149
45. Lk. 9:150-152
46. Lk. 9:153-155
47. Lk. 9:156-158
48. Lk. 9:159-161
49. Lk. 9:162-164
50. Lk. 9:165-167
51. Lk. 9:168-170
52. Lk. 9:171-173
53. Lk. 9:174-176
54. Lk. 9:177-179
55. Lk. 9:180-182
56. Lk. 9:183-185
57. Lk. 9:186-188
58. Lk. 9:189-191
59. Lk. 9:192-194
60. Lk. 9:195-197
61. Lk. 9:198-200
62. Lk. 9:201-203
63. Lk. 9:204-206
64. Lk. 9:207-209
65. Lk. 9:210-212
66. Lk. 9:213-215
67. Lk. 9:216-218
68. Lk. 9:219-221
69. Lk. 9:222-224
70. Lk. 9:225-227
71. Lk. 9:228-230
72. Lk. 9:231-233
73. Lk. 9:234-236
74. Lk. 9:237-239
75. Lk. 9:240-242
76. Lk. 9:243-245
77. Lk. 9:246-248
78. Lk. 9:249-251
79. Lk. 9:252-254
80. Lk. 9:255-257
81. Lk. 9:258-260
82. Lk. 9:261-263
83. Lk. 9:264-266
84. Lk. 9:267-269
85. Lk. 9:270-272
86. Lk. 9:273-275
87. Lk. 9:276-278
88. Lk. 9:279-281
89. Lk. 9:282-284
90. Lk. 9:285-287
91. Lk. 9:288-290
92. Lk. 9:291-293
93. Lk. 9:294-296
94. Lk. 9:297-299
95. Lk. 9:300-302
96. Lk. 9:303-305
97. Lk. 9:306-308
98. Lk. 9:309-311
99. Lk. 9:312-314
100. Lk. 9:315-317
101. Lk. 9:318-320
102. Lk. 9:321-323
103. Lk. 9:324-326
104. Lk. 9:327-329
105. Lk. 9:330-332
106. Lk. 9:333-335
107. Lk. 9:336-338
108. Lk. 9:339-341
109. Lk. 9:342-344
110. Lk. 9:345-347
111. Lk. 9:348-350
112. Lk. 9:351-353
113. Lk. 9:354-356
114. Lk. 9:357-359
115. Lk. 9:360-362
116. Lk. 9:363-365
117. Lk. 9:366-368
118. Lk. 9:369-371
119. Lk. 9:372-374
120. Lk. 9:375-377
121. Lk. 9:378-380
122. Lk. 9:381-383
123. Lk. 9:384-386
124. Lk. 9:387-389
125. Lk. 9:390-392
126. Lk. 9:393-395
127. Lk. 9:396-398
128. Lk. 9:399-401
129. Lk. 9:402-404
130. Lk. 9:405-407
131. Lk. 9:408-410
132. Lk. 9:411-413
133. Lk. 9:414-416
134. Lk. 9:417-419
135. Lk. 9:420-422
136. Lk. 9:423-425
137. Lk. 9:426-428
138. Lk. 9:429-431
139. Lk. 9:432-434
140. Lk. 9:435-437
141. Lk. 9:438-440
142. Lk. 9:441-443
143. Lk. 9:444-446
144. Lk. 9:447-449
145. Lk. 9:450-452
146. Lk. 9:453-455
147. Lk. 9:456-458
148. Lk. 9:459-461
149. Lk. 9:462-464
150. Lk. 9:465-467
151. Lk. 9:468-470
152. Lk. 9:471-473
153. Lk. 9:474-476
154. Lk. 9:477-479
155. Lk. 9:480-482
156. Lk. 9:483-485
157. Lk. 9:486-488
158. Lk. 9:489-491
159. Lk. 9:492-494
160. Lk. 9:495-497
161. Lk. 9:498-500
162. Lk. 9:501-503
163. Lk. 9:504-506
164. Lk. 9:507-509
165. Lk. 9:510-512
166. Lk. 9:513-515
167. Lk. 9:516-518
168. Lk. 9:519-521
169. Lk. 9:522-524
170. Lk. 9:525-527
171. Lk. 9:528-530
172. Lk. 9:531-533
173. Lk. 9:534-536
174. Lk. 9:537-539
175. Lk. 9:540-542
176. Lk. 9:543-545
177. Lk. 9:546-548
178. Lk. 9:549-551
179. Lk. 9:552-554
180. Lk. 9:555-557
181. Lk. 9:558-560
182. Lk. 9:561-563
183. Lk. 9:564-566
184. Lk. 9:567-569
185. Lk. 9:570-572
186. Lk. 9:573-575
187. Lk. 9:576-578
188. Lk. 9:579-581
189. Lk. 9:582-584
190. Lk. 9:585-587
191. Lk. 9:588-590
192. Lk. 9:591-593
193. Lk. 9:594-596
194. Lk. 9:597-599
195. Lk. 9:600-602
196. Lk. 9:603-605
197. Lk. 9:606-608
198. Lk. 9:609-611
199. Lk. 9:612-614
200. Lk. 9:615-617
201. Lk. 9:618-620
202. Lk. 9:621-623
203. Lk. 9:624-626
204. Lk. 9:627-629
205. Lk. 9:630-632
206. Lk. 9:633-635
207. Lk. 9:636-638
208. Lk. 9:639-641
209. Lk. 9:642-644
210. Lk. 9:645-647
211. Lk. 9:648-650
212. Lk. 9:651-653
213. Lk. 9:654-656
214. Lk. 9:657-659
215. Lk. 9:660-662
216. Lk. 9:663-665
217. Lk. 9:666-668
218. Lk. 9:669-671
219. Lk. 9:672-674
220. Lk. 9:675-677
221. Lk. 9:678-680
222. Lk. 9:681-683
223. Lk. 9:684-686
224. Lk. 9:687-689
225. Lk. 9:690-692
226. Lk. 9:693-695
227. Lk. 9:696-698
228. Lk. 9:699-701
229. Lk. 9:702-704
230. Lk. 9:705-707
231. Lk. 9:708-710
232. Lk. 9:711-713
233. Lk. 9:714-716
234. Lk. 9:717-719
235. Lk. 9:720-722
236. Lk. 9:723-725
237. Lk. 9:726-728
238. Lk. 9:729-731
239. Lk. 9:732-734
240. Lk. 9:735-737
241. Lk. 9:738-740
242. Lk. 9:741-743
243. Lk. 9:744-746
244. Lk. 9:747-749
245. Lk. 9:750-752
246. Lk. 9:753-755
247. Lk. 9:756-758
248. Lk. 9:759-761
249. Lk. 9:762-764
250. Lk. 9:765-767
251. Lk. 9:768-770
252. Lk. 9:771-773
253. Lk. 9:774-776
254. Lk. 9:777-779
255. Lk. 9:780-782
256. Lk. 9:783-785
257. Lk. 9:786-788
258. Lk. 9:789-791
259. Lk. 9:792-794
260. Lk. 9:795-797
261. Lk. 9:798-800
262. Lk. 9:801-803
263. Lk. 9:804-806
264. Lk. 9:807-809
265. Lk. 9:810-812
266. Lk. 9:813-815
267. Lk. 9:816-818
268. Lk. 9:819-821
269. Lk. 9:822-824
270. Lk. 9:825-827
271. Lk. 9:828-830
272. Lk. 9:831-833
273. Lk. 9:834-836
274. Lk. 9:837-839
275. Lk. 9:840-842
276. Lk. 9:843-845
277. Lk. 9:846-848
278. Lk. 9:849-851
279. Lk. 9:852-854
280. Lk. 9:855-857
281. Lk. 9:858-860
282. Lk. 9:861-863
283. Lk. 9:864-866
284. Lk. 9:867-869
285. Lk. 9:870-872
286. Lk. 9:873-875
287. Lk. 9:876-878
288. Lk. 9:879-881
289. Lk. 9:882-884
290. Lk. 9:885-887
291. Lk. 9:888-890
292. Lk. 9:891-893
293. Lk. 9:894-896
294. Lk. 9:897-899
295. Lk. 9:900-902
296. Lk. 9:903-905
297. Lk. 9:906-908
298. Lk. 9:909-911
299. Lk. 9:912-914
300. Lk. 9:915-917
301. Lk. 9:918-920
302. Lk. 9:921-923
303. Lk. 9:924-926
304. Lk. 9:927-929
305. Lk. 9:930-932
306. Lk. 9:933-935
307. Lk. 9:936-938
308. Lk. 9:939-941
309. Lk. 9:942-944
310. Lk. 9:945-947
311. Lk. 9:948-950
312. Lk. 9:951-953
313. Lk. 9:954-956
314. Lk. 9:957-959
315. Lk. 9:960-962
316. Lk. 9:963-965
317. Lk. 9:966-968
318. Lk. 9:969-971
319. Lk. 9:972-974
320. Lk. 9:975-977
321. Lk. 9:978-980
322. Lk. 9:981-983
323. Lk. 9:984-986
324. Lk. 9:987-989
325. Lk. 9:990-992
326. Lk. 9:993-995
327. Lk. 9:996-998
328. Lk. 9:999-1000

This illustrates the standard controversy form -- exposition, question, and answer. The material is from Q. Strong evidence for authenticity is the failure to show theological motives, e.g., John is not named as a forerunner of Jesus, nor is Jesus referred to in Messianic terms. The item is very primitive.

Albertz is quite encouraging in regard to the historicity of the controversies. He amasses the following conclusive arguments: A. "The tradition indeed is wrapped in the garment of Hellenistic language; but still the speech and style, thought and form of expression, the men who speak and the events reported, remain Jewish. On every hand there remains under the Greek shell the genuine Jewish method".¹ B. There is an appearance of freshness and unhampered literary style. On this score, says Albertz, the controversies surpass all the other gospel material. The style smacks of the actual conflicts between Jesus and his opponents. "Saying and rebuttal are not only the aim, but actually the basis of the whole tradition. They arouse again and again the impression that here lie, at their basis, conversations of Jesus and his contemporaries which were actually held."² C. There is a pronounced Jewish flavor throughout. The interest is in Sabbath observance, law, and apocalypse -- not in recognition of salvation according to Greek standards. The rabbinic style

1. Albertz, S. 57.

2. Albertz, S, 59.

prevails, in spite of the Hellenistic influences in Mark and Luke. D. The personal element about Jesus is everywhere apparent. Both his work and his words are preserved. "All the speeches let us recognize a strong impression from the personality of Jesus".¹ They give us "precious historical information about Jesus".² We see him as a teacher of unique ability, dealing with the people rather than the scribes. E. There is a wide variety of cases and occasions, and a spirit of genuine controversy. There are unexpected answers. It is not as if one molded to theological standards a story he had long known, but as if the repartee of the controversy had been taken down with stenographic accuracy. Indeed, there is little evidence of theological motivation in the controversies.

On a basis of these arguments Albertz concludes that the kernel of each controversy is historical. We see Jesus opposing the religion of his contemporaries not because of choice, but because of compulsion. When forced into conflict, he possessed powerful weapons and knew how to use them. His statements disarmed all opposition and silenced all objections. (We ought to note that this indicates the work of an individual personality -- not the arguments of a church body or the invention of a later evangelist). He spoke in rabbinic style, but more in the spirit of a prophet. In the controversies we see him at the peak of his influence.

1. Albertz, S, 63.

2. Albertz, S, 63.

Albertz does not abandon his thesis at this point. He traces the material through the stage of oral tradition, pointing out how the controversies were easily preserved because of their rhetorical unity and compactness. Oral tradition naturally shortens the accounts, neglects chronology as such, and tends to use formal introductions and conclusions. When we look for these elements in the gospels, we are surprised at their comparative scarcity. The average length of the oral unit was five verses -- not too long to be easily remembered with exactness. A lengthy ending after Jesus' final word is always a suspicious sign. Fortunately, the sign is almost never met. Albertz stresses the interest of the earliest narrators in the actual words of Jesus. It is his opinion that the quotations from Jesus can be definitely trusted -- subject, of course, to the stylistic influence involved in translation from Aramaic. Albertz takes the attitude that the controversies fulfill an apologetic purpose, but are not inventions. They are based on memory of actual events. The forms of the controversy material come not from the gentiles, but from the oldest Jewish Christians. "It is the oldest community, in which these stories circulated".¹

Undoubtedly the apologetic importance of the material increased after it began to reach the missionary field. Collections of rules and authoritative information were necessary. Since the material would come to untutored readers, details

1. Albertz, S, 101.

of time and place became necessary. How would this transfer to the gentile scene be effected? For Albertz the question holds no terror. He points out that in Jerusalem itself, in the earliest community, contact with Greek-speaking believers would occur. In the group would be many who spoke both Greek and Aramaic -- the natural translators of the material. This translation occurred early, at Jerusalem. The collection of the items was even earlier, while in the Aramaic stage. "Through the bilingualism of many members of the community the transition from one language to another came about without difficulty".

Albertz is very certain that the controversies represent just as definite a gospel form as the parables. They hold a close relationship to the other discourse material of the gospels, yet constitute a self-contained group. Any direct comparison with the purely narrative material (i.e., not involving sayings) is purposeless. The origin of the controversy form is not with Jesus himself. It lies in the whole stream of Jewish thought and history. It was an old Jewish form -- not a later Greek influence. Albertz clinches this point with a host of parallels in the Old Testament and Apocrypha.

It would be difficult to over-estimate the importance of Albertz' book. He approached the problem of historicity with frankness, and put prejudice aside while he looked at the literary form of the material itself. In contrast to Dibelius

1. Albertz, S, 110.

and Bultmann, he carefully restricted his discussion to the true field of Formgeschichte. What he decided about historicity he decided on a basis of the controversy form, its Jewish origin, and its history throughout the course of oral and written tradition. Approaching the material from this angle, he avoided being prejudiced by narrow views of early church history. Die synoptischen Streitgespräche is one of the few truly formgeschichtlich books yet written.

Albertz is a real historian in his method. Although we have traced his argument very briefly, we may regard his conclusions as beyond doubt. In the remainder of our thesis we shall not repeat arguments which Albertz has already stated so completely. His conclusions in regard to the early and authentic origin of the controversy items, their collection while still in the Aramaic stage, their accurate and trustworthy rendition into Greek, and their adequate preservation even until the time of the evangelists -- all these we may regard as quite definitely proved from the formgeschichtlich viewpoint. Our investigation goes forward with the conviction that, as far as these particular items are concerned, Formgeschichte offers a valid basis on which to demonstrate the historicity of the gospel material. This is not necessarily a verbatim accuracy. Such accuracy could never be proved or disproved. But it is an accuracy as dependable as any

historical judgments about first-century events can now be.¹

6. Bultmann.

Bultmann's Die Geschichte der synoptischen Tradition, first published in 1921, closely followed Dibelius' work. The second edition, 1931, is such an intricate book that it immediately wins admiration. But it is so skeptical and so full of useless gospel dissection that it defeats its own purpose. Its chief contributions are a minute study of the synoptic material and an extremely complex classification. The classification is essentially as follows:

- A. Apothegms.
 - 1. Controversial and didactic sayings (four sub-divisions).
 - 2. Biographical apothegms.
- B. Herrenworte (sayings of the Lord).
 - 1. Wisdom sayings.
 - 2. Prophetic and apocalyptic words (four sub-divisions).
 - 3. Laws and church rules.
 - 4. The "I" words.
 - 5. Parables.
- C. The narrative materials.
 - 1. Miracle stories (usual divisions -- healing and nature miracles).
 - 2. Historical narratives and legends (including most of the passion, Easter, and birth stories).

This classification is quite attractive, simply as a classification. But it does not classify the materials according to literary form. For example, there is no difference in form

1. It must be admitted that Albertz does not value certain portions of the gospel material as highly as he does the controversies. For example, he has branded the resurrection stories as largely mythical, and declared that the tradition will never allow us to reconstruct any trustworthy order of events connected with Jesus' last hours. Cf. Albertz, FA.

between a wisdom saying and an apocalyptic word, but there is a pronounced difference between an "I" saying and a parable. From the standpoint of Formgeschichte the classification is disproportionate.

In discussing the apothegms Bultmann notes that "This method of disputation is typically rabbinic".¹ But he insists on finding the origin of the apothegms in church life rather than in the life of Jesus. "The life setting for the controversial sayings is to be found in the discussion of the church over questions of law, which would be carried on with opponents but certainly also in their own midst".² A large number of rabbinic parallels are given -- all of interest, but of no great weight so far as the historical question is concerned. Bultmann notes a lack of motivation on the part of the questioners, and concludes that the items given are only by way of example.

In discussing the sayings Bultmann notes the prominence of argument a maiore ad minus, and the "sachlich" formulation of the material. There is a pronounced dogmatic motive, operating together with the tendency to collect related sayings. The apocalyptic sayings may be viewed as largely borrowed from Judaism -- perhaps never even spoken by Jesus. But in the parables there is a wealth of artistic form and word-pictures.

The miracle stories are regarded largely as church

1. Bultmann, GT, 42.

2. Bultmann, GT, 42.

propaganda. Even those that might be accepted as having some historical basis have been molded by tradition until they lost their authenticity. "But their purpose is indeed not biographical in the ordinary sense. The wonderful deeds are not a proof of the character of Jesus, but of his Messianic power, his divine might".¹ Bultmann sees no principle whereby one can hope to separate the elements of written and oral tradition. He believes that redaction reached into the oral as well as the written sphere.

Bultmann's conclusions about the historical development of the material are summarized as follows. "The collection of the tradition-material began in the primitive Palestinian church".² Apologetic and polemical activity led to collections of apothegms. Apocalyptic and prophetic items were gathered because of their usefulness in building a spiritual life for the church. Words of general interest were needed for teaching and discipline. Naturally, all kinds of biographical and miracle stories were told. In trying to reconstruct the course of tradition, "purpose" and "need" are our chief clues. In all this the church did not invent any new literary devices, but adopted traditional forms already well established in Judaism. Just why the Palestinian tradition was so completely adopted by Hellenists is hard to explain. It is more understandable when we

1. Bultmann, GT, 234.

2. Bultmann, GT, 393.

remember the unliterary nature of the whole procedure.

Bultmann has very little hope of recovering historical facts about Jesus. He looks for the Sitz im Leben of the gospel items in church history rather than the life of Jesus. He does not adequately recognize the outstanding position of the parables. An undue emphasis is placed upon rabbinic parallels -- interesting in themselves, but of doubtful value. The skeptical attitude and the dissector's method conspire to destroy the constructive value of his work.

In his Jesus, Bultmann appears to have suffered a change of opinion. He repeatedly uses gospel material with the tacit assumption that it has historical reliability. However, the significance of such use is eclipsed by the skeptical forewarnings of the opening pages. The author's point of view is clear. He is not interested in the personality or purpose of Jesus. All judgments on these points would be based on insufficient evidence. Neither is he interested in the significance of the teaching. "What the sources offer us is first of all the message of the early Christian community, which for the most part the church freely attributed to Jesus".¹ That is, the church's interest in such things as eschatology and obedience to God's will indicates that Jesus must have taught something along those lines, even if all our extant material is a product of the community. Eliminating all

1. Bultmann, JW, 12.

items which smack of Hellenism, Bultmann admits that "The critical analysis shows....that the essential content of these three gospels was taken over from the Aramaic tradition of the oldest Palestinian community".¹ Here is a stumbling block he never quite hurdles -- the tradition dates to the oldest Palestinian community, yet is supposed to be based largely on developing church interests. "Whoever tries, according to the modern fashion, to penetrate behind the teaching to the psychology or to the personality of Jesus, inevitably....misses what Jesus purposed. For his purpose can be comprehended only as teaching".² In spite of this warning, he tries to psychologize the gospels into divulging a picture of the early church.

Pursuing his study of Jesus, Bultmann traces the historical background as found in Jewish religion, the Messianic and anti-Roman movements, and the eschatological sacrament of baptism as used by John. He views the eschatological and Messianic elements as uppermost in Jesus' proclamation of deliverance and call to repentance. The Kingdom of God is beginning now. Genuine loyalty is needed at once. The kingdom is "that eschatological deliverance which ends everything earthly".³ It is not a new social order. The only necessity for salvation is obedience to God. Deliverance belongs to all those in the eschatological community, and is not a question of

1. Bultmann, JW, 13.
 2. Bultmann, JW, 10.
 3. Bultmann, JW, 35.

individual personality. The future kingdom is already at hand. The decision must be made now or never.

An interesting suggestion is that Jesus was actually a scribe, and had passed the scribal tests. When people spoke to him as "Rabbi", and he made "disciples", the titles were properly used. Surely the characteristics of rabbinical practice were there, though Jesus differed on points of interpretation. This is a good illustration of how Bultmann proves his own pet ideas on a basis of material he would call unhistorical in the hands of another.

Jesus agreed with his contemporaries in accepting the Old Testament law and stressing obedience to God as the essence of morality. The only difference was that "Jesus has conceived radically the idea of obedience".¹ That is, obedience ceased to be a matter of compulsion when man recognized a duty to obey God for his own sake; "he promises reward to those who are obedient without thought of reward".² It is an individual matter. "The obedience for which Jesus asks is easy, because it frees a man from dependence on a formal authority, and therefore frees him also from the judgment of the men whose profession it is to explain this authority".³ The supreme requirement for human conduct is love, a by-product of the idea of obedience. It finds its expression in the immediate present.

1. Bultmann, JW, 73.

2. Bultmann, JW, 79.

3. Bultmann, JW, 83.

The book closes with a picture of Jesus' concept of God. He is willing to forgive; he is remote yet constantly near; he answers prayer, and demands a child-like faith from man. The volume is a curious combination. It argues for a multitude of historical conclusions based upon gospel evidence, but at the same time denies the possibility of drawing such conclusions from such evidence.

In Die Erforschung der synoptischen Evangelien¹ Bultmann maintains essentially the same position as in Die Geschichte der synoptischen Tradition. He stresses the distinction between traditional material and its redaction, magnifying the latter element in Matthew and Luke as compared with Mark. "The result is primarily negative, and we conclude that the whole framework of the history of Jesus must be viewed as an editorial construction, and that therewith a whole series of typical scenes, which because of the ecclesiastical use and their poetic and artistic associations we had looked upon as scenes in the life of Jesus, must be viewed as creations of the evangelists".² Other items are recognized as genuinely old -- but great age and right tradition do not necessarily make right history.

By comparing Matthew-Luke with Mark (or Q, as far as possible), Bultmann outlines the following laws for form-history:

A. The material is given in small single pictures. B. When

1. 1930.

2. Bultmann, in Grant, FC, 28.

characters are involved there are only two who speak, and the crowd is treated as a unity. C. Oral tradition tends to make details more definite and explicit.¹ D. Indirect discourse tends to become direct.² E. There is a growing tendency to impose a schematic idea on the course of Jesus' activity; e.g., opposition to the scribes and Pharisees.

The classification of gospel material is essentially the same as in Die Geschichte der synoptischen Tradition, but somewhat abbreviated. Church history still accounts for the setting, if not for the stories themselves. When the disciples are accused in Mark 2.18-19, 23-26 or 7.1-8, we must understand the disciples as meaning the later Christian community. Even though the Jesus-saying may be old, the setting is an invention. The biographical apothegms are mostly regarded as creations of the Christian community. The words or sayings of Jesus sometimes fare better. "Even though we must give up the historicity of many of these narratives, still it remains possible, and even probable, that in many cases the saying of Jesus which they contain is thoroughly historical".³ But interpretation badly shades the historical element, so the true meaning can never be discovered. The proverbs are introduced by the later community. The prophetic sayings are altogether untrustworthy or else from Christian prophets other than Jesus, falsely set back into his mouth. Bultmann is

1. In a later chapter we shall show that this is an error; the law really works the other way.
 2. Direct discourse is normal to both New Testament and rabbinic materials.
 3. Bultmann, EE, 46.

willing to admit only that, "Even though many of the sayings may have originated in the community, the spirit that lives in them goes back to the work of Jesus".¹ This is a very discouraging view of gospel historicity. The words are not genuine, although a hazy reflection of Jesus' attitude is still there. Our picture of the historical Jesus is always shadowed by the intervening community. We can never guarantee one word of Jesus, yet there is a sort of unanimity or consistency with which the personality of Jesus is presented, and which alone is trustworthy. The needs of Christian faith and life everywhere submerged the historical aspect of the material. "One may designate the final motive by which the gospels were produced as the cultic"², that is, the needs of common worship. Since the Jews were enemies of the first-century church, they came to be pictured as responsible for the death of Jesus.

While Bultmann's work is consistent, except for parts of Jesus, its importance in the formgeschichtlich field has been vastly overestimated. His dissections are of no real value; his classifications are so complex that they confuse the material rather than clarify it; his insistence upon the influence of the Christian community is carried to an extreme.

He is hard pressed to maintain his contention that the materials originated in Palestinian communities, and assumed

1. Bultmann, EE, 58.

2. Bultmann, EE, 64.

the cult-form as they came into contact with Hellenistic Christianity where Jesus was the cult-god. That is, the gospels were products of Hellenistic literary genius, but are obviously Jewish material. We shall later show that this Jewishness of the material is authentic, and that it underwent very little change in the process of entering the Hellenistic communities. The simplest view is to regard the material as fixed in tradition at a very early date, on Palestinian soil, where it recounted actual history in contemporary terms.

Bultmann's faults grow out of the skeptical attitude with which he approaches the whole matter. Most unfortunate of all, *Formgeschichte* is forced to take a secondary place, while the gospel material is subordinated to rabbinic or Greek parallels. From the historical standpoint, his conclusions are negative. In succeeding chapters of this thesis we shall show that these conclusions are unjust. Meantime, while it is necessary to study Bultmann's negative conclusions on historicity, we regret that his books have prejudiced many scholars against the whole method of *Formgeschichte*. "This sceptical use of form-criticism is an abuse of it. Rightly employed, it is a most valuable instrument.... It seldom is adequate to prove that the Christian community had the genius to invent the incidents outright which they record".¹ As some one has said, Bultmann tries to canonize the whole first-century church. "It would not be

1. Barton, AA, 5.

unfair to describe the work as a study in the cult of the conceivable.... The real charge against him is that he is kinder to the possibilities than to the probabilities of things".¹

7. Bertram.

Bertram's Neues Testament und historische Methode can be effectively summarized with the one word "cultus". He does, however, claim to recognize a historical interest in the gospel writings. For example, Mark mentions Simon of Cyrene, father of Alexander and Rufus -- points of historical information which show that the evangelist at least was awake to such things. In many cases Jesus' words are carefully fitted into a scene which makes them historically understandable, whether we accept the scene as genuine or discard it as artificial. Mark makes a clear effort to recover some sort of itinerary, and the connective material is evidence of his desire to form a logical whole. But when Bertram has said this, he speedily goes the way of many critics, subjecting the historical interest so completely to the preaching-missionary interest that the former almost disappears. He finds the cult-history motive everywhere dominant -- that is, the influence of the cult reverence for Jesus. Examples: A. The importance of the story of Jesus' death. B. The references that Jesus spoke only for believers and not for the whole world. C. The Messianic element. D. The scandal of the cross is rejuvenated into a cult mystery.

1. Taylor, FGT, 15.

The cult motives are most perfectly developed in John. In the synoptics they are found in various degrees of development, best called "cult legends". It is as if Jesus were actually working in the church after his resurrection. They thought of Jesus in terms not of the past, but of the present. Thus the sprouting seeds of Christianity in the minds of the apostles, and especially of Peter and Paul, were the real beginnings of gospel history. It is obvious that such a view is very extreme, practically destroying gospel historicity except as cultic activity generated a pseudo-history in the minds of its adherents.

Although Bertram sometimes lessens the heat of his cultic ardor, in the long run it obscures everything else. Such elements of historicity as he is able to find are almost always destroyed when he takes recourse to the cult motive. The gospel material cannot be viewed as a cult product and still be viewed as essentially historical. The cultic religions of the first century were concerned with mysteries, not with historical facts. Regardless of whether Paul was influenced by these ideas, it is an injustice to view them as dominant in the synoptics. The material is too old, too primitive, too Jewish to be a cult product. We shall see that the historical interest, to which Bertram sincerely calls our attention, was indeed the dominant interest. The cult-mystery theory can never explain the clearly historical material of the gospels,

nor can it become an easy explanation for historical questions the gospels leave unsolved.

8. Fascher.

In 1924 Erich Fascher published Die formgeschichtliche Methode, a doctoral thesis reviewing the progress of Formgeschichte and making constructive suggestions on matters of classification and terminology. He remarks that the discrepancies between Dibelius, Schmidt, Bultmann and Albertz left the whole subject "in der Luft". He points out that there was nothing especially new in the formgeschichtlich method, tracing its roots back to Eichhorn's introduction of 1804, and to J. G. Herder's work of 1796. Of the latter he says, "He is for our continuity indeed the most important predecessor of Formgeschichte, because he viewed the form like a poet and made many a valuable observation".¹ Herder divided the material into miracle stories, speeches of Jesus, narratives about the kingdom, etc.. Fascher traces the course of development through Krummacker, Schleiermacher, Eckermann, and Gieseler (who stressed oral tradition and the motivating force of the missionary interest). Then came a reaction under the influence of Strauss and his friends, who stressed the mythical aspect of the gospel. But the reaction was short-lived, and the foundation was further strengthened

1. Fascher, FM, 11.

by Gunkel, Wellhausen, von Soden, and Wendling.

Fascher's long outline of the historical background is essentially valueless. It amounts to proving that there is nothing new under the sun. Of course, any one who reads the New Testament at all is a sort of form-critic. It is impossible to avoid classifying the material as miracle stories, sayings, etc.. But for the roots of Formgeschichte as a tool in reconstructing the first-century scene and investigating the material itself, we can scarcely profit by looking farther back than Gunkel and Wellhausen.

All the previous form-critics suffer from Fascher's ax in one way or another. Dibelius talked about "motives", "rules of style", and "form", without relating the terms; he unnecessarily limited the historical importance of the paradigms, and overestimated the influence of preaching. Bultmann minimized the importance of literary sources for the gospels, and reached back to the original elements from which the synoptics were derived. But Fascher thinks his "ideal scenes" are idealized largely in the mind of the modern critic, rather than of the original narrators. "Tendencies" are modern inventions, not characteristic of first-century methods. In an effort to be a historian Bultmann shows himself only a bungler, for he destroys the history which he started to dissect, and has nothing left. His classification is too technical, and his comparisons with rabbinic material are of little weight because they come from a later period. Bultmann is complimented upon having a

by Schmitt, Schmitt, von Schmitt, and Schmitt.

Schmitt's long history of the historical background is

essentially historical. It should be noted that there is

nothing new under the sun. Of course, say you were the

new testament of all is a sort of form-idea. It is

impossible to avoid classifying the material as various studies,

and, etc. But for the purpose of form-idea, we have

it in reconstructing the first-century scene and investigating

the material itself, we can scarcely profit by looking further

than that period and Schmitt.

All the previous form-idea rather than Schmitt's is

in one way or another. Schmitt's idea about "action", "time

of action", and "form", without realizing the fact that he himself

is limited by historical ignorance of the period, and

investigated the influence of the period. Schmitt's idea

the importance of literary sources for the period, and related

back to the original elements from which the period was

derived. But Schmitt thinks his "ideal action" and idealized

largely in the mind of the modern critic, rather than of the

original materials. "Form-idea" and modern inventions, not

characteristics of first-century schools. In an effort to be

a historical Schmitt would himself only a teacher, for he

describes the history which he started to discuss, and has nothing

left. His classification is too technical, and his conclusions

with technical details are of little value because they come

from a later period. Schmitt is complicated and makes a

better classification than Dibelius, and upon his interest in the relationship between supposed Palestinian and Hellenistic materials. But he is attacked for his skepticism, his indefinite terminology, unlimited dissection, and prejudiced view of the supposed "laws of tradition".

Fascher lauds Albertz's great contribution, namely, the recognition that the controversy stories are based on historical fact, and that the Sitz im Leben for these items is in the life of Jesus himself. Bertram, however, is attacked as proposing a cult-history rather than a form-history. He begins with his own theory rather than the material itself. He attributes the gospel material to the inventiveness of cult motives, without even telling us what the Christ-cult was. Fascher can scarcely find words strong enough to dismiss this theory. He attacks the extreme interest in cultic ideas as historically unwarranted. We have no knowledge of a Christ-cult as such. Moreover, if we allow that the material is still dominantly Palestinian rather than Hellenistic, the cult idea falls into the background. Most of the synoptic forms show Jesus as a great man. He lives, speaks, and acts. They do not show him as a god, without which there is no real cult literature. The passion story seems most tinged with the cult aspect, but it is generally regarded as the oldest and best attested part of the gospels. Thus the cult theory breaks down of its own weight.

Fascher's greatest contribution is his insistence upon the need for a clear terminology. Dibelius and Bultmann enslave themselves to the nomenclature of Greek literature. They start with a terminology rather than the material itself. Moreover, the skeptical critics are very subjective in deciding what motives they shall blame for the origin of the gospel material. For example, instead of starting with literary form and working forward, Dibelius starts with his own idea of how the gospel material was used in the early church, and argues backward.

It is good to look for the Sitz im Leben of the material, but the skeptics disagree in where to find it. Fascher is very sure that the discourse material finds its Sitz im Leben in the life of the historical Jesus. He is not always so sure about the narrative material. He discards the rabbinic parallels, as of little worth. "If we illuminate the forms of expression in the New Testament by means of Hellenistic and rabbinic parallels, about those form-analogies we are only able to say that they exist, not how they came to exist. Comparison of the literary history teaches us that the material is found in similar forms; how the form itself originated, we cannot say".¹

Fascher is a bit doubtful of the value of Formgeschichte in determining historicity. He thinks it is an error to judge too freely from form and style. Critics have erred in dissecting what was written down in a natural and carefree way.

1. Fascher, FM, 213.

Frederick's argument concerning the historical value of the material is not a general one. It is based on the fact that the material is not a record of the actual events, but a record of the events as they were perceived by the writer. This is a very important point, for it shows that the material is not a record of the actual events, but a record of the events as they were perceived by the writer. This is a very important point, for it shows that the material is not a record of the actual events, but a record of the events as they were perceived by the writer.

It is not a record of the actual events, but a record of the events as they were perceived by the writer. This is a very important point, for it shows that the material is not a record of the actual events, but a record of the events as they were perceived by the writer. This is a very important point, for it shows that the material is not a record of the actual events, but a record of the events as they were perceived by the writer. This is a very important point, for it shows that the material is not a record of the actual events, but a record of the events as they were perceived by the writer.

The original writers did not slavishly follow form-rules or analyze a style which was second nature to them.

Fascher believes that Formgeschichte is merely a refinement of literary criticism, stressing the social influence rather than the individual influence. While this is partly true, we must also remember that Fascher insists upon a simplified terminology, and upon finding the Sitz im Leben of the material in the life of Jesus himself. Both these points lead toward a verification of the gospel tradition.

9. Easton.

Burton S. Easton has combined scholarly research with a sane notion of what Formgeschichte is. He has caught a true perspective of the literary background of the gospels, but has avoided the skepticism which results from the idea that one must be as complex as possible to win the title of scholar. In his Gospel before the Gospels he reviews how the nineteenth century paved the way for the newer studies, especially through the epoch-making work of B. Weiss and H. J. Holtzmann. By them the two-source theory was formulated, and the general solution of the synoptic problem was clarified. Easton traces the development of New Testament studies through Wellhausen, Harnack, Burkitt, Streeter, Taylor, Cadbury, and others. He levels at Dibelius and Bultmann criticisms which have already been mentioned.

The original article did not identify the two levels of

analysis which was always known to them.

Further, however, that the relationship is merely a

relationship of literary criticism, according to the usual

relationship rather than the individual relationship. While this is

clearly true, we must also remember that the relationship is upon

a limited basis, and upon the basis of the two levels of

of the material in the life of Jesus himself. Both levels

point toward a verification of the Gospel tradition.

2. Method

Barth E. Hansen has combined scholarly research with

a sense of what the relationship is. He has sought a

new perspective of the literary background of the Gospel, the

has avoided the skepticism which results from the idea that the

must be as complex as possible for the sake of realism.

In his Gospel before the Gospel he reviews the relationship

century have the way for the new realism, especially through

the open-ended view of E. Schweizer and H. J. W. G. G. G. G.

that the two-level theory was formulated, and the general

outline of the synthesis problem was clarified. Hansen's

the development of the relationship should be through realism.

Hansen, Bultmann, Ellul, Gollwitzer, Gollwitzer, and others. In

levels of realism and realism criticism which have already

been mentioned.

Easton follows Fascher in his demand that *Formgeschichte* should restrict itself rather closely to a study of the forms, and avoid historical judgments. If Easton really views this as a limit of *Formgeschichte*, then he has not escaped the besetting sin of Dibelius and Bultmann, for, like them, he immediately disregards his own warning and spends the rest of his book discussing the historical background of the various forms. Indeed, it ought to be evident that *Formgeschichte* can never be restricted to a mere discipline of tearing the gospels to pieces and pasting a label on each piece. There would be no value in such a method. The listing of forms is little more than a starting point. It is on matters of content and interpretation, viewed in the light of literary forms, that Easton spends his pages. He is wise in taking recourse to Fascher's demand that the very first stage of the process, i.e., the classification, should be divorced from prejudice on matters of historical judgment. We have already noted his criticism of Dibelius on this score. Easton's notion that *Formgeschichte* can tell us nothing about the truth or falsity of the narrative is an over-zealous attempt to avoid the errors of Dibelius and Bultmann. If classification were the entire province of *Formgeschichte*, then the method would warrant only a few pages.

The demand that classification be divorced from historical judgments does not indicate that the latter field is closed to *Formgeschichte*. Indeed, Easton says that Dibelius

Erasmus follows Erasmus in his demand that Porphyrianism should be rejected. He is clearly in a state of confusion, and his historical judgment is faulty. It is not really clear that as a kind of Porphyrianism, that he has not managed to perceive any of Aristotle and Plato, but, like them, he immediately distinguishes his own writings and reads the text of his book discussing the historical background of the various forms. Indeed, it ought to be evident that Porphyrianism can never be restricted to a mere discussion of lacking the capacity to discuss and passing a label on each place. There could be no value in such a method. The listing of forms in itself is not more than a starting point. It is an outline of content and interpretation, placed in the light of literary forms, that Erasmus speaks his paper. He is also in a state of confusion to Erasmus's demand that the very first stage of the process, i.e., the classification, should be divorced from prejudice on matters of historical judgment. We have already noted his criticism of Aristotle on this score. Erasmus's notion that Porphyrianism can tell us nothing about the truth or falsity of the narrative is an over-cautious attempt to avoid the errors of Aristotle and Plato. It classification with the entire province of Porphyrianism, then the ground would remain only a few pages.

The demand that classification be divorced from historical judgment does not indicate that the latter field is closed to Porphyrianism. Indeed, Erasmus says that Aristotle

raised Formgeschichte "to the rank of a distinct discipline, with rules of its own that make it competent to pronounce not only literary but historical judgments".¹

Easton's classifications are literary rather than historical, as follows:

a. Dialogues, mostly of five to eight verses, often united by continuity of subject as in Mark 10. The dialogue form is used where we need to know the setting, or require an interlocutor such as "the disciples", "scribes", or only "they". Easton believes it to be a genuine, straight-forward form. Each dialogue contains a single "kernel" saying of Jesus, or of some one approved by him. This saying usually closes the scene, though it may be taken as the starting point for a succeeding parable or discourse unit. In the dialogues the second party is usually described very indefinitely, if at all. There is little indication of time or place, the sole purpose being to reach Jesus' concrete statement of some general principle. We must remember that in the first century specific questions were always solved by recourse to a general principle.

b. Miracle stories. "Here, unquestionably, is a definite type of story with abundant parallels throughout the ancient world everywhere".² Pure examples of the form are found in Mark 5.1-20 and Luke 7.11-17. Herein are all the

1. Easton, GBG, 31.

2. Easton, GBG, 67.

elements of the miracle form, including a description of the illness, its incurable nature, the use of healing formulas, complete success of the miracle, and the testimony of witnesses. Easton calls our attention to the fact that the so-called nature miracles do not follow this standard form. Opinion on this point might differ, but it would be universally agreed that the miracle stories are usually short, complete, and to the point. Among the items Easton rejects are the cursing of the fig tree, the coin in the mouth of a fish, and the star over the manger. He concluded that the historian must accept or reject each item separately. This is a good conclusion in some ways, but unfortunately leaves the whole matter to personal opinion.

c. Easton considers the passion story as a unit by itself. In this he keeps good company, though it ought to be remembered that the passion unit is really a combination of smaller units. His listing of these component elements is unusually complete, including seventeen items. This should be regarded as a maximum. The case against Jesus appears to him sufficiently supported to demonstrate that Jesus actually made for himself the claim with which he was charged.

Easton is correct in saying that the much-quoted excerpts from second-century rabbinic sources are highly academic and of little value in establishing the historicity of the gospel account.

d. Easton regards the parable as a clearly distinguished

form. He does not discuss it in great detail, since the characteristics are more or less self-evident.

e. Sayings. Easton is of the opinion that sayings of single sentences, often isolated without explanatory context, can scarcely be investigated. Certainly it is in vain to classify single sentences on the basis of form, as Bultmann does.¹ Easton thinks of many sayings units as groups of isolated sayings which have been collected by tradition or compilation around a common theme, and freely linked together to make longer discourses. In such groups of sayings he recognizes form structure, especially the poetic stanza. Examples include the Beatitudes according to Matthew, the Lord's prayer, and Luke 6.27-29, 32-35, 36-38. This poetic form is also indicated by parallelism of structure such as in the three units of Matthew 6.1-18, the three woes in Luke 11.42-52 (cf. seven woes in Matthew 23.13-26), and the "think not" repetition in Matthew 5.17ff. We feel constrained to say that Easton has been, if anything, too careful on this point. We shall elsewhere discuss the great significance of poetic form in the gospels. But the sayings-forms have other distinguishing characteristics besides their poetry. The dominance of direct discourse, the grouping of isolated sayings around a common theme -- these are definite form-characteristics, and are clearly defined in the sayings groups. For Easton the sayings have essentially the same historical value as the dialogues.

1. E.g., logion, apocalyptic word, church rule, etc..

Thus we see that Easton holds a rather conservative view of the classifications. The method we shall adopt as a working basis for this thesis is little different. But Easton's conservatism is especially evident when he considers the relationship of literary form to historicity. He attacks the logic-tight compartments into which Dibelius divided the process of tradition during the first twenty or thirty years, and says that it would be impossible for us at this late time to trace the process so exactly. "'Paradigms' and 'stories' show different tendencies but not different dates of origin. Neither need be the outgrowth of the other, nor need 'mixed' forms be preceded by 'pure' forms; why might not the preacher, the story-teller, and the teacher be one and the same person?"¹ This statement we can support in every respect. But we cannot support Easton's further conclusion that *Formgeschichte* tells us about form, wording, and use of detail, but has nothing to say about the relative age or historicity of the material. He says, "Form-criticism may prepare the way for historical criticism, but form-criticism is not historical criticism".² Such an opinion is not warranted by the facts. While the two are not synonymous, *Formgeschichte* certainly has a right to contribute toward historical conclusions. On the other hand, Easton is right when he says that there is no such thing as legendary form. Form alone cannot condemn an

1. Easton, GBG, 80.

2. Easton, GBG, 80.

item as legendary, though formal characteristics may point in that direction. Sayings, for example, have a style as well as a form, and the two are somewhat different. Easton is right when he says that, "Our research, accordingly, must have a wider scope and must consider the sayings as a whole. And we must put our reliance only on tests that can be objectively verified".¹

In spite of Easton's distrust of Formgeschichte in determining historicity, he has written in his Gospel Before the Gospels some fine pages in verification of the gospel story. Since the arguments are not strictly formgeschichtlich, we shall not reproduce them here. They will recur as we try to demonstrate that Formgeschichte actually verifies the conclusions which Easton and others reach through more traditional literary methods.

The clearest instances of legend and myth are found in the latest layer of synoptic tradition, if at all. The wonders in connection with the crucifixion, the earthquake, rending of rocks, and opening of tombs, may be explained on the basis that they belong to a layer of tradition farthest removed from the date of the event. The same is true of the coin in a fish's mouth, Peter walking on the water, Pilate's wife's dream, the procurator washing his hands, the manner of Judas' death, etc.. Luke offers in this category the story of ten lepers, the call of Peter, and the rejection

1. Easton, GBG, 88.

at Nazareth; Mark has the death of the Baptizer, the cursing of the fig tree, and the miraculous feedings. On the whole, such accretions are fewest in Mark. They are most frequent in the later parts of Matthew and Luke. Just how one determines what are "later portions" is a matter for discussion. But such is Easton's contention, and it appears to be verified when Matthew and Luke are compared with Mark. This is not form criticism. It is purely literary criticism.

The question of historicity is frankly faced by Easton in Christ in the Gospels. This is a remarkable book, dedicated to the proposition that Jesus himself was responsible for the forms of the sayings attributed to him. They are like sermon texts of which the parables are illustrations. He even supports Matthew's authorship of Q in an effort to show a continuous history for the sayings. He adds that Mark's story of John the Baptizer is an abbreviation from Q, whereas Matthew and Luke copied the source more fully. If Mark actually had Q, he esteemed it so highly that he made his own task one of supplementing it rather than trying to replace it.

Our author is not so sure about the miracles. In these the form may be due to the disciples, who told of the events even when Jesus had cautioned secrecy. When the missionary need arose, the material was ready. It was put into Greek, the passion story was added by popular request, and the whole was given an appearance of continuity.

Reaching out from Jerusalem as a center, the best informed teachers passed the material to others in such form that the tradition rapidly became fixed.

The contribution of Christ in the Gospels toward establishing historicity lies in the arguments for an early dating of the material in essentially its present form. These arguments will be outlined here and expanded elsewhere:

A. The forms are Jewish and Palestinian, even though written in Greek. B. They are in form to memorize, according to standard methods of Jewish pedagogy. C. They show an interest in Jewish questions and scribal minutiae. D. The Greek language is no bar to early dating. Palestine was full of people who spoke Greek. E. There are still traces of provincialisms of speech which Jesus himself must have used. F. There is obvious effort, in view of the expected apocalyptic return, to keep Jesus' words in a pure state. It was a matter of life and death to those who awaited the catastrophe. G. There is a total absence of later theological forms and formulas. H. Jesus is called "Rabbi", and viewed as a typical Jewish teacher.

These arguments, in their expanded form, are of remarkable weight. They constitute one of the few contributions directly in the field of this thesis.

Easton's conclusions may be stated thus: The synoptic material is truly "not in order", since the items are usually arranged on a basis of similarity in form or content. Again,

there are literary touches for their own sake. For example, Luke 9.51 pictures Jesus heading for Jerusalem, but in Luke 17.11, after eight chapters of travelling, he has made practically no progress. It must be remembered, that such a situation does not affect the historicity of the events and sayings recorded. The incidents presented in the gospels are typical -- not inclusive.

It is regrettable that Easton doubts the effectiveness of Formgeschichte in reaching decisions on historicity. Perhaps this is an effort toward conservatism, or the result of too narrow a definition of Formgeschichte. As a matter of fact, he does a good deal of the thing he declares impossible.

10. Kundsinn.

In 1929 Karl Kundsinn published a brief work entitled Das Urchristentum in Lichte der Evangelienforschung. This has been made available in English by F. C. Grant. The point of view of the author is expressed as follows: "In the hands of scholars, it has become increasingly clear that the gospels and their sources are primarily the expression and reflection of the faith and life of the early Christian churches which produced them."¹ It is noteworthy that Kundsinn includes under this sweeping statement not only the canonical gospels, but also "their sources". Everything is a result of Christian

1. Kundsinn, ULE, in Grant, FC, 81.

These are the only cases in which the
... of the ... of the ...
... of the ... of the ...
... of the ... of the ...
... of the ... of the ...
... of the ... of the ...

It is ... of the ...
... of the ... of the ...
... of the ... of the ...
... of the ... of the ...
... of the ... of the ...
... of the ... of the ...

... of the ... of the ...
... of the ... of the ...
... of the ... of the ...
... of the ... of the ...
... of the ... of the ...
... of the ... of the ...

... of the ... of the ...
... of the ... of the ...
... of the ... of the ...
... of the ... of the ...
... of the ... of the ...
... of the ... of the ...

... of the ... of the ...
... of the ... of the ...
... of the ... of the ...
... of the ... of the ...
... of the ... of the ...

faith and church life. After pointing out a case of supposed community influence in Mt. 18, he writes: "When one's eye has been trained to recognize such facts, it will be seen that there is hardly a passage (with the exception of certain parts of the Gospel of Luke) where this is not the case"¹ -- i.e., where the community influence is not dominant at the expense of historicity. "Whether the evangelist is dealing with counsels regarding prayer, alms-giving and fasting, or with the attitude toward the Sabbath and the laws regarding ceremonial purity, or with concern for earthly treasure, or with the hostile world and with tribulation and persecution, it is the Christian fellowship of the Church which is always to be seen in the background, a fellowship bound together by a common experience and a common hope".² This attitude is carried to a violent extreme. Among the examples of community invention are the following: A. The Lord's Prayer. "Even in the form we have the Prayer in the gospels, it is without doubt derived from the praying community".³ B. The Sermon on the Mount and parallels in Luke. Kundsinn views this as an artificial program for Christian community life. He discards the discourse entirely, so far as Jesus is concerned, but seems to cling to the possibility that the mountain setting reflects an event in the life of Jesus. He has retained only the part usually believed to be artificial. C. In the

1. Kundsinn, ULE, in Grant, FC, 87.

2. Kundsinn, ULE, in Grant, FC, 87.

3. Kundsinn, ULE, in Grant, FC, 89.

controversies it is often the disciples (rather than Jesus) who receive the charge of error. The disciples should be regarded as the post-resurrection Christian community, and the charges listed are those brought against this community by their enemies. In other words, the whole matter is divorced from the historical Jesus. Kundsinn will admit only that "the earliest phase of the common tradition presupposes the land and the speech of Palestine, and carries us back to the period before the destruction of the Holy City by Titus."¹

The influence of the community is also viewed as determinative in such matters as use of the term "Son of Man". This term was in common use in certain eschatological-apocalyptic circles. "A careful examination of the 'Son of Man sayings' shows that at a certain point, sometime after the appearances of the Risen Lord.....the conviction arose and began its course: Jesus himself is the Son of Man".² Such a view takes the term out of the mouth of Jesus and puts it into the mouth of the church. However, Kundsinn does allow that items such as Mk. 14.62 or Mt. 10.23 may have come from Jesus.

This eschatological faith of the primitive church led to a missionary zeal, for it became necessary to save as many of one's fellow men as possible. Realizing the overwhelming importance of salvation and the utter unimportance

1. Kundsinn, ULE, in Grant, FC, 94.

2. Kundsinn, ULE, in Grant, FC, 97.

of everything else, the Christian underwent a complete inner separation from the world. This is reflected in passages about leaving relatives, enduring suffering, associating with the poor, and overlooking class distinctions. These items are not to be viewed as coming from the life of Jesus, but as biography of the Christian community. Samples are found in Lk. 12.33, Mt. 13.44-45, Lk. 12.51, 22.25, 14.12ff, etc..

The accounts of wanderings¹ represent not the work of Jesus and the twelve, but the wanderings of poverty-stricken missionaries of the early church. Their earliest activity was not centered at Jerusalem as recounted in Acts, but covered the whole of Palestine.² Kundsinn

diminishes the importance of James in the early church, looks in vain for traces of his supposed legalistic views in Mark and Q, and concludes that from the very first the Christian group existed apart from Pharisaic scribism. It was closely related to the people of the land. Among the Jewish elements remaining in Christian thought were the sacred temple and Sabbath observance. The common meal, with its cultic significance for the new life, was central to church activity.

Kundsinn carries to the limit his reconstruction of church history from the synoptics. He argues that the apparent preference for Hellenistic forms and literary

1. Mk. 6, Lk. 9-10, and Mt. 10.

2. Cf. Mk. 6.6-11, Mt. 10.5-16, Lk. 9.1-5, 10.2-12.

types (e.g., miracle stories, biographical apothegms, and legends) is reflection of the transition to Hellenistic universalism. At the same time there was a release of the eschatological tension, to be replaced by the conception of Holy Spirit as sustainer and inspirer. National limitations were broken down. A wider interest in women, publicans, and outcasts was typical of the church's wider social outlook. "Son of Man" was replaced by the more Hellenistic title "Son of God". Luke's special material about outcasts, sinners, Samaritans, and publicans represents Hellenistic thought, even though given a false setting in Palestine. This represents the final breakdown of national barriers. Every man was viewed as a child of God.

In the oldest stratum the Holy Spirit is like the spirit of Yahweh in the Old Testament. But in the typically Christian (Hellenistic) passages, it becomes a power especially given to Christians. "All this forces us to the conclusion that the conception of the 'Holy Spirit' was inseparable from the new stage of Hellenistic Christianity, with which it grew up, and which we must suppose to have been a Christianity of out-and-out religious enthusiasm.... It was primarily the Gentile-Christian community which was the community of the Holy Spirit."¹

Kundsin regards all passages bearing any reference to Peter or his family as later insertions of the church, added

1. Kundsin, ULE, in Grant, FC, 128.

when Peter came to prominence and there was general need for a recognized central authority. Peter was the leader in the movement toward universalism. "However, in view of the tradition, the conclusion must be drawn that the beginnings even of this movement are to be sought within the borders of Palestine. The roots of the Gospel of Mark go back clearly to Jerusalem and Galilee, as both its topography and its description of the background show".¹

Out of the stage just mentioned came a further development: A. Under the primacy of Peter, the loose brotherhood developed a theocratic ecclesiasticism. "It is quite clear that the Kingdom of Heaven (in its earthly stage) is nothing more nor less than a new kind of fellowship, the Church".² This stage is demonstrated in Matthew. The tares in the field are trouble-makers in the church. The "little ones"³ are its members, easily led astray. Since Matthew best represented this strong ecclesiasticism and inner unity of the church, it became the most popular gospel among loyal churchmen. B. The Spirit-filled life developed into a doctrine resting on a sort of scribism. The Sermon on the Mount is not the teaching of Jesus -- it comes from the church, and is a compendium of church rules. Jesus was viewed as the new Law-giver, parallel to Moses. The church did this "with the clear purpose of meeting with

1. Kundsinn, ULE, in Grant, FC, 139.

2. Kundsinn, ULE, in Grant, FC, 142.

3. Mt. 18.

their own weapons and upon their own territory the strongest opponents of Christianity, the Jewish teachers of the Law".¹ With every new situation the followers of Jesus were forced to reinterpret the meaning of their experience and faith. There was a sort of "decline and fall" from Parousia expectation to a church full of "tares" -- yet at every stage recourse was taken to the gospel of Jesus by way of final appeal.

Kundsin carries the ideas of Bultmann several stages further. He is radically destructive, and leaves no hope of recovering any actual facts about the life of Jesus. Indeed, this entire thesis might be viewed as a refutation of Kundsin. Among his many errors are the following:

a. He assumes that at every stage of developing church history the Christian group took recourse to the "authentic gospel" of Jesus. What was this authentic gospel? If we can believe Kundsin, practically none of it has been preserved for us. In what kind of cold storage was it kept, that it could be available for constant reference? Rather, Kundsin's view of church development presents a picture of error built upon error, without any "authentic gospel" to which even the earliest groups could appeal. The inconsistency is fundamental: The material is largely church invention disguised as the words or works of Jesus, yet those words and works could still be appealed to as authentic. Why would Christians, to

1. Kundsin, ULE, in Grant, FC, 128.

whom the Jesus-salvation was a matter of life and death, preserve only crude counterfeits of the available original? Kundsins point defeats itself.

b. In spite of his contention that the synoptics as a whole represent the supra-national Hellenistic faith, he is forced to admit that the "roots" of Mark and Q lie in Palestine and Judaism. It will become apparent as we study Formgeschichte that not merely the roots, but the stem, branches and very leaves of the gospels are Palestinian and Judaistic. When Kundsins says that the style and form of the gospels are Hellenistic, he stands alone on an unpopular and indefensible peak. A comparison with Fiebig's work will put aside all doubt. We are driven to the conclusion that the forms are Jewish, and primitive enough to reach back to the time of Jesus' own life. This is the breaking point of Kundsins' theory. Deprived of Hellenistic forms and style, he could not maintain that the gospels were products of a late Hellenistic Christianity.

c. It is more reasonable to maintain that the supra-national aspect of Christianity had its basis in Jesus' own teaching than to claim that it was a result of church development. Indeed, this was a unique characteristic of Jesus. Kundsins attributes all genius to the community. But there would never have been a Christian community apart from the historical Jesus. Genius must be located in an individual rather than the community.

when the church was a center of life and death.

But the church was not a center of life and death.

It was a center of life and death.

It was a center of life and death.

It was a center of life and death.

It was a center of life and death.

It was a center of life and death.

It was a center of life and death.

It was a center of life and death.

It was a center of life and death.

It was a center of life and death.

It was a center of life and death.

It was a center of life and death.

It was a center of life and death.

It was a center of life and death.

It was a center of life and death.

It was a center of life and death.

It was a center of life and death.

It was a center of life and death.

It was a center of life and death.

It was a center of life and death.

It was a center of life and death.

It was a center of life and death.

It was a center of life and death.

It was a center of life and death.

It was a center of life and death.

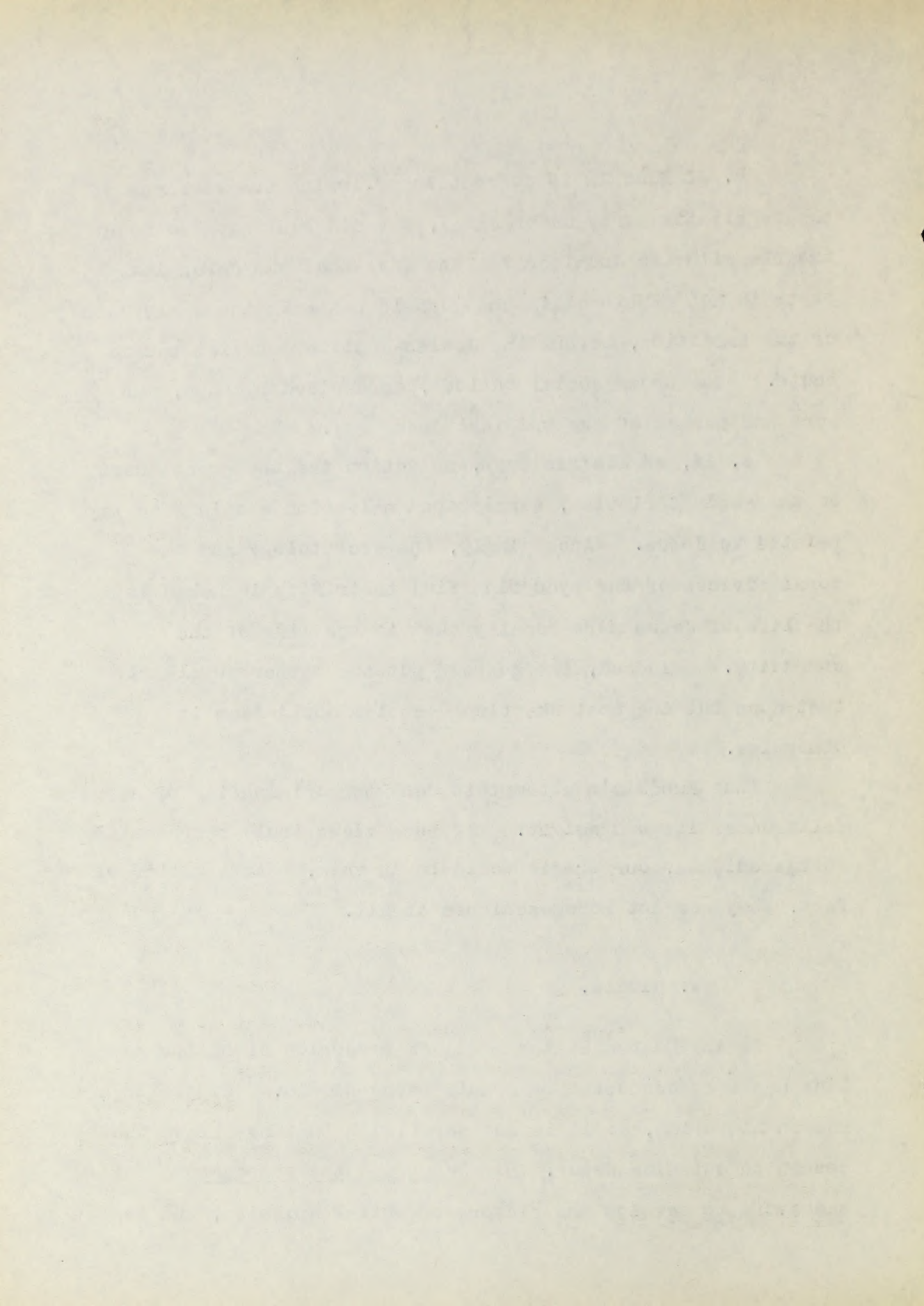
d. If Kundsinn is correct in affirming the weakness of the legalistic party under James, why did Paul have so much trouble with the Judaizers? The fact that the Jerusalem party is not mentioned in the gospels bespeaks the early date of the tradition, before the Jewish-Gentile conflict became acute. The broad social outlook, emphasized by Luke, was part and parcel of the original Jesus way.

e. If, as Kundsinn says, salvation was the great quest of the early Christian, surely that salvation was in some way related to Jesus. Accordingly, the eschatology and the moral ~~advice~~s of the synoptics find their Sitz im Leben in the life of Jesus more readily than in the life of the community. Indeed, the gospels put the matter so clearly that none but the most skeptical scholar could deem it otherwise.

Thus Kundsinn's attempt to deny the originality of Jesus falls under its own weight. If such views truly represented Formgeschichte, our thesis would be in vain. As a matter of fact, they are not Formgeschichte at all.

11. Riddle.

In the United States a milder excursion along the same line has been conducted by Donald Wayne Riddle. Riddle is a church historian, so it is not surprising that he allows the church to outshine Jesus. His Jesus and the Pharisees endeavors to develop the history of anti-Pharisaism, and to



counteract the notion of the Pharisees so prevalent in Sunday School texts. He concludes that Mark is anti-scribal, but not definitely anti-Pharisaic. It is not clear from Mark that the scribal ranks and the synagogue practice were dominated by the Pharisees. In the later gospels the situation is changed, and "the Matthean and Lucan editions of the earliest Gospel tend to heighten the unfavorable picture of the Pharisees".¹ This is particularly true of Matthew. In Acts the Pharisees are replaced by the generic group of "Jews". Riddle claims that, since we see this anti-Jewish aspect in Acts reflecting the current state of the church, we must assume it for Luke's gospel also. This is not true -- indeed, it violates the whole course of Formgeschichte. Properly applied, Formgeschichte will solve the problem thus: The earliest tradition thought of social and religious leaders as scribes and Pharisees. There can be no doubt that they occupied that position. Jesus asked of these leaders a life more consistent with their own traditions and rules. This essential fact is preserved in the tradition. It explains why Luke used "Pharisees" in his Gospel, but in Acts used "Jews". In the Gospel he is a careful follower of tradition, using the terms preserved by tradition. In Acts he is an author, writing his own account in his own words.

Riddle endeavors to reduce Luke-Acts to a development of the theory that Jesus' universal teaching was offered first

1. Riddle, JP, 20.

to the Jews, and was refused by them, and then offered to the Gentiles. This is more than a theory. It is a historic fact, as far as our records show. For Riddle, however, it is a matter of apologetics. He can take no other stand, in view of his insistence that Christianity first got its self-consciousness among Gentiles, and was from beginning to end a dominantly Gentile movement. "Christianity grew up in Gentile communities with the character known to have obtained among other such religious groups. Growing in this manner, its earliest years were spent without special relation to Jews and Judaism, so that it was not until it had considerable popular currency that it came into relation with Judaism".¹ Certainly the synoptics cannot be explained on such a basis. Are the disciples a list of Romans? Did Jesus preach to students of Greek philosophy? Formgeschichte leads in exactly the opposite direction.

There is no reason for calling Riddle a form-critic. He has scarcely a page of form criticism in his books, and restricts himself to a theoretical type of historical criticism. He makes Paul dominantly anti-Pharisaic (though his letters fail to show it), and thereafter makes all the gospels (even Mark, from Rome) depend upon his Pauline hypothesis. "While the exigencies of the situations in which he (Paul) was directing his effort were such that specific notice of the Pharisees is not prominently reflected in the

1. Riddle, JP, 65.

sources, there is none the less in the Pauline letters, and presumably in the Pauline communities, a latent or unarticulate basis for the attitude of anti-Pharisaism which emerges so sharply in the Gospels".¹ The trouble with this theory is that it discards the whole discovery of *Formgeschichte*, namely, that the synoptic tradition is actually earlier than the Paulines, and accordingly is nearer the historical scene. This point cannot be emphasized too strongly.

Riddle practically admits that he does not know what *Formgeschichte* is. He writes, "The next step"² was the application of social history (or, as it is called by German scholars, *Formgeschichte*), which is the attempt to account for the rise of the gospels, not by appeal merely to the literary phenomena of their sources, but by the discovery of the interests which caused their production".³ This may be "social history", but it certainly is not form history. *Formgeschichte* is concerned primarily with the evidence derived from a study of literary forms. It approaches the material with an open mind on historical questions. It has no pre-conceived theory to account for gospel origins. Riddle starts with what he thinks were the chief interests of the church; *Formgeschichte* starts with the synoptic material itself. Indeed, if we restricted this chapter of

1. Riddle, JP, 91.

2. I.e., after noting the importance of motives in the New Testament writings.

3. Riddle, JP, 94.

our thesis to strictly formgeschichtlich material, it would be much shorter. The field has been invaded by so many critics that the very definition of the method is at stake.

In the final analysis, Riddle is almost as extreme as Kundsinn. Of Mark he says, "As a matter of fact, it requires little historical perspective to see that the teaching cited is simply the generalization of Christian practice current at the time and in the milieu of the writing of this Gospel".¹ In other words, the church writes all its thought and experience into the life of Jesus. For example: "Clearly, the practice of the Pauline communities was non-ascetic, so that the practice furnished a ready basis for the enunciation of the principle as a part of the teaching of Jesus".²

In discussing Matthew, Riddle takes a surprising course. He examines the material, and looks for a place of origin where it might fit. Having fixed upon Antioch as this place, he executes an about face and concludes that the Christians in Antioch invented the material out of their own experience.

Here is the question: Did a social situation come first, and give rise to certain notions about the life of Jesus? or did Jesus first live, and by his work and teachings give rise to a certain social situation? Riddle makes Paul the real founder of Christianity, and the social situation a predecessor

1. Riddle, JP, 107.

2. Riddle, JP, 114.

of the narrative about Jesus. Formgeschichte, on the other hand, views the gospel forms as reliably retained by tradition, reaching back to Jesus himself as the starting point for a new social situation. Riddle says scarcely a word about the gospel forms. His work is not form criticism, even though it bears a relation to Kundsins' views.

In The Martyrs Riddle outlines the same point of view. The gospel account of Jesus preparing for death is viewed as a result of the church's experience during the Neronian period. Riddle regards Mark as a primitive church martyrology. The foresight of death, interest in other martyrs,¹ and parts of Mark 13 show an interest in martyrdom for its own sake. This is extremely doubtful. When Hebrews was written, its author was troubled not by people's eagerness to become martyrs, but by their unwillingness to suffer for the faith. Eagerness for martyrdom was a later development, though the gospel traditions undoubtedly supplied comfort to those who were called upon to suffer even in the Neronian period.

Riddle's latest work is Early Christian Life as Reflected in its Literature. In it he stresses the cultic nature of the resurrection faith, and the simplicity of the primitive preaching. Historicity of the Jesus narrative is dismissed with only a passing gesture. "The hearer of the story who was familiar with apocalyptic expectations naturally laid little emphasis upon the Messiah's earthly

1. E.g., Mark 10.38f.

of the narrative about those things which, in the other
hand, when the author takes as his starting point for a
reading about the things which are the starting point for a
new world around him. This is not to say that the author
is not a realist in his view of the world, even though
it is a realist in his view of the world.

In the History of the World the author takes as his starting point
the general account of the world as it is viewed as
a result of the author's experience during the period of
his writing. This is a realist account of the world, and
it is not to be confused with the account of the world
which is given in other works, and which is not to be
confused with the account of the world which is given in
other works.

This is not to say that the author is not a realist in his
view of the world, even though it is a realist in his
view of the world. This is not to say that the author is
not a realist in his view of the world, even though it is
a realist in his view of the world. This is not to say
that the author is not a realist in his view of the world,
even though it is a realist in his view of the world.

The author's account of the world is a realist account of
the world. It is not to be confused with the account of
the world which is given in other works, and which is not
to be confused with the account of the world which is given
in other works. This is not to say that the author is
not a realist in his view of the world, even though it is
a realist in his view of the world.

The author's account of the world is a realist account of
the world. It is not to be confused with the account of
the world which is given in other works, and which is not
to be confused with the account of the world which is given
in other works. This is not to say that the author is
not a realist in his view of the world, even though it is
a realist in his view of the world.

career, if, indeed, the thought occurred to him. Enough for him that Jesus had died and had been raised from among the dead and was in heaven whence he would one day come in his messianic capacity".¹ Paul was not interested in Jesus as much as in the charismata. The only reason the non-Pauline leaders preserved the gospel stories was in an effort to compete with wonder-tales told about other cult-gods or Aesklepius the hero-healer. "In such a way competition accounts for much of the content of the gospel materials".² At first the cults were not consciously Christ-cults. They became such only as the cult leaders ascribed their own moral code to the teachings of Jesus. "It is of fundamental importance that while certain of the gospel materials were produced in Palestine, and that while some of the tendencies toward the aggregation of these materials may be observed at this stage, the gospel as such was the creation of the Hellenistic communities".³ "It is thus implied that the experiences of the missionaries are the ultimate basis of the teachings which stand in the sources".⁴ Mark was an innovator more than a preserver.

It is obvious that Riddle, like Kundsinn, destroys Jesus for the sake of church history. His work is not really Formgeschichte at all. Indeed, Formgeschichte would disarm

1. Riddle, CLL, 9.

2. Riddle, CLL, 71.

3. Riddle, CLL, 77.

4. Riddle, CLL, 81.

under, it, indeed, the thought occurred to him, though
 for his first years and that was his first year, though
 the fact was in his mind he would not say even in
 his own mind, "I am not interested in them."
 as much as in the character. The only reason the non-
 religious leaders preserved the Gospel stories and in an effort
 to compare with modern-day life and about other things or
 teaching the new teacher. "In such a way as to make
 accounts for some of the content of the Gospel materials."
 At first the only way was not necessarily direct. They
 began then only as the new leaders wanted their own
 moral code for the teaching of Jesus. It is of fundamental
 importance that while certain of the Gospel materials were
 preserved in isolation, and that while some of the traditions
 found the preservation of these materials may be observed as
 this stage, the Gospel as such was the message of the
 "It is then implied that the
 experience of the missionaries and the ultimate basis of the
 teaching which found in the sources." Mark was an
 innovator only when a preserver.
 It is obvious that while, like Kuhnle, destroy Jesus
 for the sake of ethical history. His work is not really
 representative of all. Indeed, Kuhnle's work is

1. Kuhnle, III, 2.
2. Kuhnle, III, 11.
3. Kuhnle, III, 11.
4. Kuhnle, III, 11.

him with one question: If the gospels are a product of Hellenistic missionary work thrown back into the mouth of Jesus, how does it come that so many of the fundamental problems of gentile missions are not mentioned there? Especially, how does it come that the forms and settings are Palestinian-Jewish throughout? It is impossible to deny that the literary forms of the gospels are Palestinian, Jewish, and primitive -- probably dating back to the years from 30 A.D. to 40 A.D..

12. Grant.

F. C. Grant also belongs with those who agree that the New Testament was a church book, without any personal significance. "The proper historical approach to the study of the New Testament is thus by way of church history, viz., in its earliest period".¹ His presentation of the fundamentals of Formgeschichte involves nothing extraordinary, the unliterary nature of the writings being coupled with the argument from church needs. Interesting points of view include the following: A. There was a purposeful selection of gospel material even during the oral period. B. During the oral period there were pronounced blocks or compilations of units. C. The parables are among the most authentic portions. D. He enlarges the list of controversies, so as to include a great deal of the pre-passion material in Mark.

1. Grant, GG, 28.

Thus controversy becomes a sort of clue to the gospels, reflecting the apologetic activity of the church as well as Jesus' own controversies. E. The Ur-Marcus theory is discarded in favor of emphasis upon Mark's dependence on sources.

Most of The Growth of the Gospels is taken up with questions which could be treated by recourse to the two-source or four-source theories. Grant's *Formgeschichte* consists merely of an emphasis upon oral tradition. His chief contribution has been the translation of Bultmann's and Kundsinn's short works in Form Criticism. It is helpful to have these in English, as they afford an introduction to the extreme aspects of *Formgeschichte* represented by these two men. Grant seems to agree with them in approaching the gospels by way of church history, rather than by a study of the synoptic material.

13. Taylor.

A book of wide influence is Vincent Taylor's The Formation of the Gospel Tradition, published in 1933. Taylor follows the hypothesis of M and L documents, but admits that "it remains a matter for further inquiry whether M is a unity, and whether L is more than a cycle of oral tradition". This view, if accepted at face value, is an aid to the form-geschichtlich study of the gospels. It makes Q, Mark, L,

1. Taylor, FGT, 6.

and M all earlier than 70 A.D., and argues for early documents (or strata of oral tradition) of a very definite nature.

Taylor is wise in restricting his study to the gospel material itself. He regrets the effort to find parallels to the gospel forms even as far afield as Francis of Assisi, and concludes: "If one thing emerges from Historical Criticism more than another it is the distinctiveness and originality of the Gospels. We compare these books with everything else on earth, only to find that there is nothing quite like them".¹ He is careful not to take Formgeschichte too whole-heartedly. He observes that most formgeschichtlich investigations make tacit use of other branches of historical criticism besides that of pure form, and that they "rest too lightly on the results of Source-Criticism...".² Moreover, some items do not have a distinct "form", nor is it certain that they ever existed apart from their present connections.

Taylor urges as a better title for paradigms and apothegms the term "pronouncement stories". He believes that these have the character of real folk-traditions. The title of "miracle stories" he accepts, and acknowledges that the group has clear formal characteristics. However, he registers a determined protest against Bultmann's division of the sayings-forms into five minor classifications. These distinctions are not based on differences in form, but merely

1. Taylor, FGT, 8.

2. Taylor, FGT, 20.

in style or subject matter. The same is true of the term "legend" -- it involves a preliminary historical judgment, and is not the title of a form. These important points have been previously considered.

Taylor also warns against the highly subjective effort to split up the forms as they now exist and label some parts older than others. In other words, we cannot assume that the forms ever existed in any other status than that in which we now have them. We must study the forms as they are in the canonical New Testament. Yet, the assumption that the material first existed in individual units "appears to be fully justified".¹ Exceptions are the passion story, the two major groups of controversies listed by Albertz, the four stories of Mark 1.21-39, and the series of miracles in Mark 4.35-5.42 and Mark 6.31-8.26. These groups of characteristic form-units appear so homogeneous in their present state that they may be regarded as associated together from the beginning.

Taylor thinks of Formgeschichte as represented chiefly by Dibelius, Bultmann, and Kundsinn. Against them he levels this criticism: "It is on this question of eyewitnesses that Form-Criticism presents a very vulnerable front. If the Form-Critics are right, the disciples must have been translated to heaven immediately after the Resurrection. As Bultmann

1. Taylor, FGT, 39.

sees it, the primitive community exists in vacuo, cut off from its founders by the walls of an inexplicable ignorance.... Unable to turn to any one for information, it must invent situations for the words of Jesus, and put into His lips sayings which personal memory cannot check. All this is absurd".¹ This is just the criticism I have already directed at Bultmann. In a later part of this thesis we shall note the influence of eyewitnesses in proving the historicity of the form-units as we have them. The eyewitnesses, like Jesus himself, would naturally use the forms which were characteristic of their day. It is folly to ignore this, for thereby we lose a connecting link between the material and its true Sitz im Leben, namely, in the life of Jesus.

Let us briefly consider the classifications as Taylor gives them:

a. The passion narratives. This material was the earliest to have a united nucleus. It has an appearance of continuity. The gospels agree in the general order of events, and there is an impression of historicity. The facts are told, without much account of what Jesus said -- in contrast to apocryphal stories of the crucifixion, which are full of prophetic sayings of Jesus. Surely this part of the gospels was the first which would be needed for apologetic purposes. Taylor attributes the various gospel settings to

1. Taylor, FGT, 41.

and is, the primitive community exists in nature, not only
 from its formation by the will of a supernatural being...
 which is true, in any case for the present, it must be
 admitted that the world of nature, and that the life
 of things which surround every human being. All this is
 "natural". This is just the opposite I have already
 indicated as "artificial". In a later part of this thesis we
 shall note the influence of civilization in forming the
 character of the human mind as we have seen. The spe-
 cialization, like human nature, would naturally have been
 which were characteristic of their age. It is only by
 nature, that, for example, we have a permanent link between
 the material and the form which is based, namely, in the life
 of things.
 Let us briefly consider the classification of Taylor
 given above.
 1. The human mind.
 2. The human body.
 3. The human soul.
 4. The human spirit.
 5. The human intellect.
 6. The human will.
 7. The human emotions.
 8. The human passions.
 9. The human faculties.
 10. The human powers.
 11. The human qualities.
 12. The human virtues.
 13. The human vices.
 14. The human sins.
 15. The human crimes.
 16. The human laws.
 17. The human customs.
 18. The human traditions.
 19. The human institutions.
 20. The human societies.
 21. The human states.
 22. The human nations.
 23. The human world.
 24. The human universe.
 25. The human existence.
 26. The human life.
 27. The human death.
 28. The human resurrection.
 29. The human judgment.
 30. The human reward.
 31. The human punishment.
 32. The human glory.
 33. The human shame.
 34. The human honor.
 35. The human dishonor.
 36. The human fame.
 37. The human obscurity.
 38. The human success.
 39. The human failure.
 40. The human triumph.
 41. The human defeat.
 42. The human victory.
 43. The human loss.
 44. The human gain.
 45. The human wealth.
 46. The human poverty.
 47. The human health.
 48. The human sickness.
 49. The human strength.
 50. The human weakness.
 51. The human beauty.
 52. The human ugliness.
 53. The human youth.
 54. The human old age.
 55. The human life.
 56. The human death.
 57. The human resurrection.
 58. The human judgment.
 59. The human reward.
 60. The human punishment.
 61. The human glory.
 62. The human shame.
 63. The human honor.
 64. The human dishonor.
 65. The human fame.
 66. The human obscurity.
 67. The human success.
 68. The human failure.
 69. The human triumph.
 70. The human defeat.
 71. The human victory.
 72. The human loss.
 73. The human gain.
 74. The human wealth.
 75. The human poverty.
 76. The human health.
 77. The human sickness.
 78. The human strength.
 79. The human weakness.
 80. The human beauty.
 81. The human ugliness.
 82. The human youth.
 83. The human old age.
 84. The human life.
 85. The human death.
 86. The human resurrection.
 87. The human judgment.
 88. The human reward.
 89. The human punishment.
 90. The human glory.
 91. The human shame.
 92. The human honor.
 93. The human dishonor.
 94. The human fame.
 95. The human obscurity.
 96. The human success.
 97. The human failure.
 98. The human triumph.
 99. The human defeat.
 100. The human victory.

the influence of community centers where the material was preserved. Luke, he thinks, had a good deal of independent material, while Matthew had comparatively little of historical importance (though some legendary matter). The nucleus was quite definite in its extent, and implicitly accepted. In the course of frequent repetition the users remembered other incidents of a related nature, and the addition of these incidents caused variation in the gospel accounts. The story of the trial and death naturally hung together. This is not true of the resurrection stories, which existed individually and did little more than state a fact. Thus there is a wider variety of local influence in the resurrection stories than in those about the arrest, trial, and death.

b. Pronouncement stories. Taylor's best sample is the tribute money, Mark 12.13ff. In this category he gives a good example of how a critic's own ideas influence his form-geschichtlich classification. For example, we find listed here several miracles which Taylor thinks are remembered because of interest in a controversial question, rather than because of interest in the healing itself.¹ Other items, originally² pronouncements, have gotten into unnatural attachments. Taylor's pronouncements roughly parallel Dibelius' paradigms or Bultmann's apothegms, though Taylor is sometimes more lenient in his listings. He declares that "the contents of the

1. E.g., Mk. 3.1-5.

2. E.g., Mk. 2.27f.

Pronouncement-Stories are their sufficient guarantee".¹

c. Sayings and parables. Taylor notes the fact that Mark stressed the sayings, even though he did not have the Q material. He put together isolated sayings, using some catch-word as a basis for the compilation. This naturally led to an artificial arrangement. Luke and Matthew did the same thing; e.g., Luke 16.16-18 includes three sayings of widely different character, held together by the common word "law". Such a compilation was an aid to the weak memory. "This procedure implies the anxiety of early Christian teachers that the words of Jesus should be remembered; it also implies the existence of communities ready to be taught".²

The parables are recognized as possessing a distinct form. Even the most skeptical critics cannot deny this, and it is a reassurance to the milder ones.

d. Miracle stories. At this point Taylor introduces notes on experiments he conducted to determine the results of oral tradition. The twentieth century is not exactly comparable to the first century, but the general result is in accord with what we see in the gospels themselves. "The experiments show that the tendency of oral transmission is definitely in the direction of abbreviation".³ Thus he argues that the longer miracle forms are nearer their original state. He neglects to add the very cogent argument (which will be

1. Taylor, FGT, 87.

2. Taylor, FGT.

3. Taylor, FGT, 124.

expanded in a later chapter) that a process of shortening really increases our confidence in the historicity of the material itself. If passing time led to a longer tradition, we might infer that false material was written in. But since it leads to a shorter tradition, it indicates that the material was being boiled down to a thicker consistency; i.e., the unit became a brief, self-sustaining, compact whole.

Taylor traces the work which has been done in finding non-Biblical parallels to the miracle stories, and believes that the material thus discovered is distinctly similar. Personally, I do not believe the parallel is as distinct as Taylor allows. Koehler is right when he says the parallels prove only "that healing stories are everywhere narrated in the same manner, because they everywhere take pretty much the same course..... A healing is not unhistorical because it has parallels".¹ Taylor himself remarks that "the main conclusion to be drawn from the parallels is the restraint and beauty of the Synoptic narratives".² The synoptic miracle forms are really helped by comparison with non-Biblical miracle forms. In such a comparison their higher aesthetic worth and deeper sincerity are clearly demonstrated. Taylor believes the miracles are told not as demonstrations of Jesus' Messianic power, but to illustrate his beneficent activity. On the historical side, their form is definitely favorable. Taylor

1. Koehler, PT, 37.

2. Taylor, FGT, 130.

extended in a later chapter) that a process of identifying
really important, and significant in the history of the
material world. It is being like in a longer tradition,
we might have been able to find it. But since
it is not a matter of fact, it is important that the material
was being boiled down to a single statement, i.e., the
will become a fact, self-evident, without words.
Taylor leaves the work which has been done in this
non-scientific material to the scientific method, and believes
that the material thus discovered is absolutely reliable.
Especially, I do not believe the parallel is as simple as
Taylor shows. Whether it is right when he says the parallel
exists only "that feeling existed are everywhere present in the
same manner, because they everywhere take place in the
same manner. . . . A feeling is not unalterable because it
has parallel." Taylor himself remarks that "the fact
conclusion is to draw from the parallel in the scientific and
history of the scientific method." The scientific method
forms are really helped by comparison with non-scientific methods
forms. In such a comparison their high scientific worth and
greater similarity are clearly demonstrated. Taylor believes
the sciences are full of the same method as Taylor's. He thinks
power, but he illustrates his scientific activity. On the
historical side, there is definitely favorable. Taylor

states that Formgeschichte, while it does not solve the problem of miracle, puts us in a favorable position to understand the miracles in the light of both historic fact and personal conviction.

e. The stories about Jesus. Taylor believes that these have no standard form, but occur in a variety of ways. Among them are the literary style of John's preaching, the popular type of Mark 6.14-16, and the story type as found in the call of the disciples. They are not "legends", though there is no real biographical interest. They merely try to give the witness of tradition to the story of Jesus. Their extent is less than one would naturally suppose, Mark having only about eighteen items. Matthew tends to allow an apologetic and doctrinal interest to color his stories,¹ while Luke stresses stories with a symbolic or universal aspect.² Though the forms vary, they were shortened rather than lengthened by tradition. "The result...of a study of the formal aspects of the Stories about Jesus is to strengthen confidence in their historic value".³

Taylor reconstructs the early history of the material thus: A. From 30 A.D. to 50 A.D. the Christians preserved cycles of reminiscences. These took on the nature of a collection of isolated stories, sayings, or sayings-groups. The tradition was shaped by eyewitnesses, and was fitted to practical needs of the Christian community. The sayings of

1. E.g., the virgin birth.
 2. E.g., the Samaritan stories.
 3. Taylor, FGT, 166.

Jesus were preserved with unusual care, but the narratives sometimes suffered. B. From 50 A.D. to 65 A.D. the scattered elements were gathered into related groups, based upon a topical rather than a chronological relationship. In this period Q and L began to take form. C. The period from 65 A.D. to 100 A.D. was the time of gospel compilation, in which the synoptics were developed into their present form. Taylor here stresses his Proto-Luke hypothesis.

Taylor avoids the dangerous attempt to separate editorial supplements from the primitive oral forms. He points out that the forms themselves offer no basis for this, that the supposed "joints" are usually so smooth as to make the distinction dubious, and that the process can never reach beyond a "study in historical probability".¹ On the whole, his work tends to show that Formgeschichte is on the constructive side when the question of historicity is concerned.

14. Fiebig.

Of all the available material, some twenty pages in Paul Fiebig's Rabbinische Formengeschichte und Geschichtlichkeit Jesu represent the most direct attempt to deal with the question of historicity in the light of gospel forms. No one ought to say that he has studied Formgeschichte until he has read these pages. They present the matter with such

1. Taylor, FGT, 34.

These were preserved with unusual care, but the manuscripts
 remained unedited. I found 25 A.D. to 25 A.D. the
 scattered elements were gathered into related groups, based
 upon a logical rather than a chronological relationship.
 In this period I and I began to take notes. The period
 from 25 A.D. to 100 A.D. was the time of general compilation,
 in which the fragments were developed into their present
 form. Taylor later arranged his fragments systematically.
 Taylor avoided the dangerous attempt to secure editorial
 assistance from the primitive oral form. He points out
 that the form themselves offer no basis for this, that the
 supposed "joint" was usually as known as to make the
 historical basis, and that the process was never really
 beyond a "study in historical probability." On the whole,
 his work seems to show that Taylor's analysis is on the
 conservative side when the question of historicity is concerned.

(4) Finding

Of all the available material, some twenty pages in
 form of a Handwritten Manuscript and Handwritten
Notes represent the most direct attempt to deal with the
 question of historicity in the light of Gospel form. It
 was eager to say that the historical basis would be
 has been found.

a burst of sincere scholarship that one's opinion of Formgeschichte is entirely changed. Fiebig's only prejudice is his emphasis upon the importance of rabbinic parallels, but even this he keeps under control. He abandons the wild search after "some new thing", and uses the tool at hand with admirable skill. He stresses one fact of supreme importance, namely, that the Sitz im Leben of the gospel material is largely to be found in the actual life of Jesus. He is committed to the belief that Formgeschichte can rightfully form historical judgments, and regrets that its true power has suffered blight because of the skeptical view which has been associated with the method. "But form and content hang closely together. Often one cannot rightly comprehend the content unless one has previously examined the form".¹

Fiebig adopts the view that the gospels are composed of "kleinen Einheiten", namely, sayings, parables, anecdotes, and other less important forms. When skeptics sneer at the intelligence of the first Christians, he reminds us that they were Jews filled to the brim with Jewish culture and traditions. After all, he asks, why should oral tradition be unreliable? We live our daily lives on a basis of oral tradition, and most people try to tell the truth in relating an anecdote. Oral tradition is fundamentally trustworthy. The tradition came first to the eyewitnesses, with a definite "Zusammenhang mit dem Leben".² But it was impossible for them to remember

1. Fiebig, FGJ, 23.

2. I.e., relationship with life.

a point of almost absolute indifference that one's opinion of the
movement is entirely changed. This is only to be expected, for
his attitude upon the importance of certain principles, or
even such as have never existed. He abandons the old
after "some new thing", and now the fact at hand with
admirable skill. He stresses the fact of various important
things, that the view is based on the general material is
largely to be found in the actual life of Jesus. He is
convinced to the belief that the fundamental and right
view historical judgments, and respects that the first view is
entirely right because of the historical view which has been
associated with the method. "For form and content have
often one cannot rightly comprehend the
movement unless one has previously examined the form."
This is the view that the Gospel is composed of
"Christian Elements", namely, sayings, parables, anecdotes,
and other less important forms. When students meet at the
intelligence of the first Christian, he realizes that they
were then filled to the brim with Jewish culture and traditions.
After all, he asks, why should one tradition be considered
as five our daily lives on a basis of oral tradition, and was
people say to tell the truth in relation to an ancient oral
tradition is fundamentally trustworthy. The tradition came
first to the Christians, with a certain "Christianity" and
the Jews. But it was impossible for them to recognize
the Jewish view of life.

every word verbatim, so variations entered the reports. Tendency, criticism, and interpretation began to be felt even when eyewitnesses still bore the tradition. But here is the characteristic point of Fiebig's view: "All these affecting elements are yet in themselves no argument against the historicity of the event concerned. The tendencies of a history are in themselves no argument for unhistoricity or falsification. Variations of the reports do not in themselves authorize doubt about historicity".¹ Like anecdotes about any teacher, it may be impossible after his death to recover details of time, place, and order. This does not vitiate the truth of the anecdotes, nor the fact that the collector puts them in what appears to be the order of logical development. "Also the following will be observed: In the case of a great teacher the chief interest rests mostly on his utterance (discourse). Now the collector also has such an interest in the discourse and not in chronology, place or other circumstances, so he gladly lets go the traditional framework.... Yet we must always bear in mind that every spoken word must have had its framework".² It is a fundamental error, says Fiebig, to discard the framework as given to us in the gospels themselves. Every probability favors its correctness, to say nothing of the fact that many items are such as to make possible only one time or location.

1. Fiebig, FGJ, 28.

2. Fiebig, FGJ, 23.

every word, and so variations entered the report.
Tendency, criticism, and interpretation began to be felt even
when specialists still bore the tradition. But here is the
characteristic point of Wright's view: "All these affecting
elements are put in themselves as arguments against the
historicity of the event reported. The likelihood of a
history that in themselves no argument for historicity or
reliability. Variations of the report are not in
themselves evidence about historicity."
However about any matter, it may be impossible after this
fact to restore details of time, place, and order. This
fact may violate the truth of the anecdote, not the fact that
the collector puts down in what appears to be the order of
logical development. "Also the following will be observed:
In the case of a great teacher the chief interest would center
on his utterances (discourses). Now the collector also has
when an interest in the discourse and not in chronology, place
or other circumstances, we are likely to be the traditional
framework. . . . Let us not always bear in mind that every
spoken word must have had its framework. It is a funda-
mental error, says Wright, to discard the framework as given
to us in the gospel themselves. Every probability favors
its correctness, so any suspicion of the fact that many items
are such as to make possible only one place or location.

To support the above contention Fiebig compares the gospels to the material of the rabbinic world. He insists that the rabbinic literature is a genuine "Kleineliteratur", in anecdotal style. Personally, I think Fiebig presses this contention too far. The rabbinic material has certain points of comparison. The rabbis made great use of oral tradition, and in this practice the Christian tradition was right at home. But there are also decided contrasts in both content and style.

Dibelius and Schmidt do not consider the halakah extensively, because they believe that it has a highly literary style as opposed to the unliterary aspect of the gospels. Against this Fiebig protests, declaring the halakah to be highly popular, and in direct "Zusammenhang mit dem Leben". But the halakah was built on a basis reaching back to Moses. Here the gospel material has a distinct advantage so far as historicity is concerned. The words of Jesus have their own contemporary historic setting recorded with them. All the usual haggada forms, too, have their parallels in the gospels. The people loved stories, parables, and clever sayings. They represented the thought- and speech-forms of the day, and were used by Jesus and the rabbis alike. Since they were normal to that day and that method, the probability of their historicity is increased. In this respect we must always remember that Jesus frequented the synagogues, and was at home with Pharisees and scribes. He knew their teachings and teaching methods; he was a Hebrew using Hebrew forms; he freely used the styles of halakah and

To support the above contention I shall compare the
 Gospel to the material of the rabbinic world. He insists
 that the rabbinic literature is a genuine "Kleinigkeit", in
 anecdotal style. Personally, I think this between this
 contention too far. The rabbinic material has certain points
 of comparison. The rabbinic world is not of oral tradition,
 and in this respect the Christian tradition was right at home.
 But there are also certain points in both content and style.
 Rabbinic and Gospel do not consider the material
 extensively, but they believe that it has a highly literary
 style as opposed to the literary aspect of the Gospel.
 Against this I think protest, declaring the rabbinic to be highly
 popular, and in style "Judenhumor" with the rabbinic. But the
 rabbinic was built on a basis reaching back to Moses. Now the
 Gospel material has a distinct advantage so far as historical
 is concerned. The words of Jesus have their own contemporary
 historic setting recorded with them. All the usual legends
 found, too, have their parallels in the Gospel. The people
 level stories, parables, and clever sayings. They represented
 the thought and speech-forms of the day, and were used by Jesus
 and the rabbin alike. Since they were natural to that day and
 that world, the probability of their historicity is increased.
 In this respect we must always remember that Jesus represented
 the synagogue, and was at home with Pharisees and scribes.
 He knew their teachings and teaching methods as well as Hellenes
 using Hebrew terms; he freely used the style of rabbinic and

haggada. For this reason the disciples found it easy to remember his words. The mosaic style of the gospels is genuinely rabbinic, says Fiebig. The oral tradition represents the genuine Hebrew style; the form-units are complete in themselves; time, place, and other details are of secondary interest. In all these items the gospel material is analogous. Jesus' chief point of departure was in the more popular nature of his teachings. He was volkstümlich in the extreme.

Both the gospels and the rabbinic materials depend largely on discourse in the first person; indeed, the ancient Oriental scarcely knew the art of indirect discourse. Both have large numbers of controversies and miracles -- the former undoubtedly of great historic worth, and the latter offering no literary basis for doubt. "For many miracle stories of the gospel it is true that they belong back in the oldest Hebrew-Aramaic tradition. For a verdict about their historicity this is of greatest importance".¹

Dibelius and Bultmann doubt the historicity of the material because they view oral tradition with misgivings. Fiebig refutes this view by contending that the presence of oral tradition is the one thing which helps above all others to establish gospel historicity. That is, the oral tradition reaches right back to Jesus and retains the facts of his life.

Jesus used both the halakah and the haggada forms.

1. Fiebig, FGJ, 39.

Even though he was opposed to halakic standards, he used the halakic form to express haggadic material (i.e., he put ethico-religious material in a legalistic guise).

In such items as the Lord's prayer and the last supper Fiebig finds a lack of Hellenistic color, but a wealth of Hebrew atmosphere. The poetic style and the Passover formulas show a Jewish environment. These items belong in the circle of Jesus, not the gentile mission.

In Rabbinische Formengeschichte und Geschichtlichkeit Jesu there is a lack of illustrative material from the gospels. Perhaps this is because Fiebig had previously compared the rabbinic and gospel styles in his book Über den Erzählungsstil der Evangelien. The comparisons are mostly on a basis of grammar, not of form. Yet grammar is a characteristic of literary form, and the comparisons are valid as far as they go. Items considered include: A. The abundance of imperatives. B. The poetic parallelisms. C. The a minori ad maius type of reasoning. D. The tendency to stereotyping. E. The practice of assembling short sayings. F. The prevalence of direct discourse. G. Redundancy (e.g., "he answered and said...."). H. The rugged directness of statement.

The difference, on the other hand, lies in the fact that Jesus stressed the inner religio-ethical fulfillment of the law rather than the juridical view.

Thus we see that Fiebig over-stresses the parallels between gospel and rabbinic material. The parallels exist,

but they are not the sole determining factor. In our discussion of sources we shall see that wide variations cause the rabbinic materials to lose much of their effectiveness as parallels. The time element must also be considered. The gospels are earlier, and had a much shorter period of oral tradition. This consideration is in favor of gospel historicity. If the rabbis could preserve a large amount of material in oral tradition for many years, surely Jesus' followers could preserve a small amount for a few years.

Fiebig's priceless contributions are these: A. An emphasis upon the reliability of oral tradition. B. The evidence for an undoubted Hebrew-Aramaic dominance in the gospel tradition. C. The early dating of the material in its oral form. D. The powerful self-authenticating aspects of the gospel materials. E. Most important of all, the contention that the material must find its "Zusammenhang mit dem Leben" (i.e., Sitz im Leben) in the historical life of Jesus himself. Viewed in any other light the material becomes distorted, and its meaning is lost. There is no way to explain either its origin, purpose, or preservation. Fiebig was not chiefly interested in the problem of historicity, so his conclusions on that score are sometimes vague. In spite of this, he does much to establish the reliability of the gospel account.

last they are not the only determining factor. In our
 discussion of sources we shall see that while various sources
 the historian attempts to trace back to their origin as
 possible. The first element must also be considered. The
 sources are earlier, and had a much shorter period of oral
 tradition. This consideration is in favor of Gospel
 historicity. If the reader could preserve a large amount of
 material in oral tradition for many years, surely Jesus
 himself could preserve a small amount for a few years.
 Historicity - Historicity consideration the second A. An
 estimate upon the reliability of oral tradition. B. The
 evidence for an undoubted Hebrew-Aramaic dominion in the
 Gospel tradition. C. The early dating of the material in the
 oral form. D. The powerful self-authenticating aspects of
 the Gospel material. E. Most important of all, the conviction
 that the material must find its "Bewährung" in the Gospel.
 (i.e., life in Jesus) in the historical life of Jesus himself.
 There is any other light the material becomes distorted, and
 the meaning is lost. There is no way to explain either the
 origin, purpose, or preservation. Fidelity was not chiefly
 interested in the problem of historicity, so his conclusions
 on that score are certainly vague. In spite of this, he does
 much to establish the reliability of the Gospel account.

15. Dodd.

Perhaps the most active form-critic in England is C. H. Dodd. His point of view is tied up with the notion of kerygma, or preaching, which he defines as the public proclamation of Christianity in the non-Christian world. In this definition the key-word is "proclamation". He believes that early Christian preaching consisted of a bold, stereotyped statement of the broad outline of Jesus' life and Messiahship. It was this that Paul submitted to the apostles at Jerusalem.¹ Characteristic texts of the New Testament kerygma are found by Dodd in I Corinthians 15.1ff (the text of all Dodd's thinking), Romans 1.1-4, Romans 8.31-34, and others. He believes that the title "Lord" was used by Jesus himself.

The kerygma was a doctrinal statement, untrammelled by ethical interests. In Paul's writings the following elements are found: A. The fulfillment of prophecy and the inauguration of the New Age. B. Jesus was born of the seed of David. C. He died according to the Scriptures. D. He was buried. E. He rose on the third day, according to the Scriptures. F. He was exalted at God's right hand as Son of God and Lord of the quick and the dead. G. He will come again, as Judge and Savior.

In Acts the case is only slightly different, the kerygma stressing the Holy Spirit and the necessity for repentance, with less emphasis on salvation. Dodd strongly believes in a

1. Galatians 2.2.

Jerusalem Aramaic document as the basis for Peter's speeches in Acts, and the personal experience of Luke (or some equally reliable evidence) as the basis for Paul's.

Dodd discusses first the preaching of Peter and Paul. This is indicative of his emphasis upon Acts and the Paulines, rather than the gospels. In his Apostolic Preaching and its Developments the chapter on the gospels deals with almost everything except the gospels. True to his theory of "realized eschatology", he stresses the eschatological expectation of the early church. He believes this had a strong influence on the tradition, even though the eschatological element was not typical of Jesus' own teaching. In Matthew this futuristic interest is especially pronounced. But when history failed to fulfill the eschatological expectation, the center of interest turned back toward Jesus himself. "Thus the authentic line of development, as the expectation of an immediate advent faded, led to a concentration of attention upon the historical facts of the ministry, death, and resurrection of Jesus, exhibited in an eschatological setting which made clear their absolute and final quality as saving facts".¹ In regard to the kerygma he writes, "We can trace in the gospel according to Mark a connecting thread running through much of the narrative, which has some similarity to the brief summary of the story of Jesus in Acts 10 and 13, and may be regarded as an expanded form of what we may call the

1. Dodd, AP, 93.

formulated specific document as the basis for Peter's speeches in Acts, and the personal experience of Luke (or some equally reliable evidence) as the basis for Paul's. Both historians find the preaching of Peter and Paul. This is indicative of his emphasis upon Acts and the Pauline, rather than the Gospel. In his Antiochian History and the Development of the Church on the Syrian Coast with almost everything except the Gospel. This is the history of "twisted ecclesiology," as it is the ecclesiastical expectations of the early church. He believes this had a strong influence on the tradition, even though the ecclesiastical element was not typical of Jesus' own teaching. In Matthew this traditional interest is especially pronounced. But when history failed to fulfill the ecclesiastical expectations, the center of interest turned back toward Jesus himself. Thus the essential line of development, as the expectation of an immediate advent failed, led to a concentration of attention upon the historical facts of the ministry, death, and resurrection of Jesus, exhibited in an ecclesiastical setting which made their events and final quality as saving facts. In regard to the history he writes, "The one thing in the Gospel according to Mark is a convincing record running through much of the narrative, which has been identified in the brief summary of the story of Jesus in Acts 1:1-3, and may be regarded as an extended form of what we may call the

historical section of the kerygma".¹ This kerygma, in other words, is the theme of Mark's gospel. It is identical in framework with the kerygma found in Acts. The work of Jesus is not recounted primarily for historical purposes, but as an amplification of the call to repentance which was characteristic of the church's kerygma. Matthew and Luke carry the matter still farther, their expansion being sometimes based on the true kerygma, and sometimes not (e.g., the sayings). "Matthew is, in fact, no longer in the pure sense a 'Gospel'. It combines kerygma with didaché, and if we regard the book as a whole, the element of didaché predominates."² Matthew compensates for this by developing a "futurist eschatology". Luke indicates an increased interest in Jesus as wonder-worker and lover of mankind -- yet no more than was implied in the kerygma phrase that he "went about doing good, because God was with Him". Dodd concludes that "the eschatological valuation of facts of the past, the life, death, and resurrection of Jesus Christ, resulted in the production of that distinctively Christian form of literature known as gospels".³ In John, on the other hand, eschatology had already given way to a Christ-mysticism -- a supernatural eschatology which has its fulfillment here and now. This completes the course of development which began with Paul, and which Dodd has called "realized eschatology", a concept which he believes vital to the whole kerygma. That is,

1. Dodd, AP, 104.

2. Dodd, AP, 121.

3. Dodd, AP, 133

the futuristic interpretation of eschatology was really a mistake. Its first and final forms were that of a realized eschatology, already come to pass.

In The Parables of the Kingdom Dodd affirms the essential authenticity of the parables, largely because they bear "the stamp of a highly individual mind".¹ He thinks that the settings are occasionally unauthentic. "We shall sometimes have to remove a parable from its setting in the life and thought of the church, as represented by the Gospels, and make an attempt to reconstruct its original setting in the life of Jesus".² However, he regards the majority of the parables as having settings which bear on actual situations in the life of Jesus. Exceptions are found where the futuristic eschatology was superimposed. In such cases a general application was given to sayings originally intended for a particular situation, or sayings meant for a past crisis were made to apply to one of the future. Examples: A. The parabolic saying on salt, or the lamp and bushel. B. The talents, or pounds.

Dodd supports the usual two-source theory as a practical approach to gospel study, though he is careful to note that Q may be only a stratum of oral tradition. In History and the Gospel he points out that the various gospel forms all lead toward certain major conclusions about the life of Jesus -- a unanimity which bolsters the historicity of the record. In

1. Dodd, PK, 11.

2. Dodd, PK, 111.

the historical interpretation of a philosophy was really a mistake. The first and third points were that of a realized philosophy, already seen to pass.

In the Parables of the Kingdom Dodd writes the essential authenticity of the parables, largely because they bear "the stamp of a highly individual mind." He thinks that the parables are occasionally untranslatable. "We shall sometimes have to remove a parable from its setting in the life and thought of the church, as represented by the Gospels, and make an attempt to reconstitute the original setting in the life of Jesus." However, he regards the majority of the parables as having settings which bear on actual situations in the life of Jesus. Expositions are found where the historical situation was given to sayings originally intended for a particular situation, or saying meant for a past crisis were made to apply to one of the future. Examples: A. The parables saying on salt, of the lamp and candle. B. The parables, or parables.

Dodd suggests the usual two-points theory as a historical approach to Gospel study, though he is careful to note that it may be only a scheme of oral tradition. In History and the Gospel he points out that the various Gospel forms all have certain major statements about the life of Jesus -- a unanimity which bolsters the historicity of the reports. In

a later chapter we shall expand this idea.

Professor Dodd has shown no sign of departing from his overemphasis upon the kerygma in Acts. He judges the gospels by Acts and Paul. This is a complete reversal of the normal historical approach. He allows the gospels to offer no history for its own sake. What they do offer is for the sake of the kerygma, a stereotyped outline of Jesus' life and work. He has a vague general confidence in the tradition, but judges it entirely on a basis of the non-gospel kerygma. The error of this system is that the kerygma is recovered from Acts, the latest of the documents. In later chapters we shall see how Formgeschichte demonstrates that the Marcan material is not only earlier than Matthew and Luke, but reaches back in oral tradition to a period earlier than the Paulines. If we reverse Dodd's standard of judgment, his material takes on new significance and his contribution becomes genuine. Scott has expressed essentially the same criticism when he declares that Dodd assumes the gospel of the church was a formal statement about Jesus, quite different from Jesus' own gospel.¹ This is an error. The dominance of direct discourse in the gospels is sufficient to show that this material has its proper Sitz im Leben in the life of Jesus, not in the life of the church.

Another criticism that may be directed against Dodd is in connection with his "Realized Eschatology". He has a

1. Harvard Theological Review, Vol. 29.

right to hold this opinion, but he is largely on the defensive when he assumes that a futuristic eschatology among the early churchmen gave the gospel material a false coloring. When this element is properly weighed, its influence on the question of historicity is slight.

16. Scott.

E. F. Scott, while perhaps not to be listed as a form-critic, has contributed some very important material. He writes: "There is no regular account even of the ministry. What we have is rather a selection of anecdotes or tableaux, which in their origin were evidently quite separate".¹ In an article for the Harvard Theological Review² he stressed the growing knowledge of an Aramaic background for the gospels, the admitted fact that the synoptics do contain some theology, and that they are documents for the study of church history as well as for the study of Jesus. He applauded the new emphasis upon the literary character of the synoptics, and the effort of Formgeschichte to reach back to the ultimate sources. In The Gospel and its Tributaries he protested against attempts to destroy the uniqueness of Christianity, affirming that in spite of any supposed relationships to Judaism or the cults there was a spiritual power in Christianity which was unique.

1. Scott, LNT, 61.

2. Scott, CG.

right to have this opinion, but he is largely on the defensive when he assumes that a fundamental scientific theory is merely an opinion. When this element is properly weighed, its influence on the question of relativism is slight.

10. Error.

E. F. Cope, while perhaps not to be listed as a relativist, has contributed some very important material. His article "Error is the regular accompaniment of the scientific method" is rather a collection of quotations or statements, but it is a very valuable piece of work. In an article for the Journal of Theoretical Biology he stressed the growing knowledge of an animal's background for the purpose of the selection test that was applied to certain cases of biology and that they are concerned for the study of animal biology as well as for the study of human. He explained the new knowledge of the living organism at the present time, the theory of homeostasis as a result of the discovery of the effect of the hormones and the endocrine system in the selection of the organism. He stressed the importance of the organism's ability to adapt to its environment as a result of the discovery of the effect of the hormones and the endocrine system in the selection of the organism. He stressed the importance of the organism's ability to adapt to its environment as a result of the discovery of the effect of the hormones and the endocrine system in the selection of the organism.

The brevity of the gospels is really a blessing. The material is scant enough that it cannot be filled with irrelevant details. The inadequacy of the record is due not so much to its brevity as to the uniqueness of Jesus himself. We have no human standards with which to compare him. In The Gospel and its Tributaries the Jewishness of the gospel is supported, even in the face of strong Hellenistic influences.

Scott is pleased that attention has recently shifted from a theological interest in Jesus to a historical interest. "It cannot be said that the change of attitude has brought the assurance and the unanimity which were confidently expected a generation ago. In place of the old doctrinal controversies we have historical ones, in which opinions are even more widely at variance".¹ But the gospels are as historical as such records can be. "There may indeed be many things in the narrative which are due to later guess-work, or reflection, but the literary analysis has surely demonstrated that it rests on genuine tradition. The fundamental data must have existed in a written form at a time when the career of Jesus was still a living memory".² In spite of variations in the accounts, there is general agreement. Everything we hear about Jesus bears the same stamp. His words and deeds are in harmony with one another, and testify to the same individuality behind them. To be sure, a certain kind of concentration on doubtful

1. Scott, GT, 48.

2. Scott, GT, 49.

minutae, breaking the material up into sentences and words, would spell the death of any historical record. History starts with general agreements -- not with minute contradictions.

There are few lives in antiquity about which we know as much as we do about Jesus. "It must be noted, too, that the record deals far less with mere outward happenings than with incidents, linked as a rule with some memorable saying, which reveal character. Such anecdotes are the most valuable part of any biography".¹ Again: "It may confidently be said that, if we had possessed an official biography of Jesus in which everything he ever did was carefully noted, most of the serious difficulties would be just as great as they are now. Perhaps they would be greater, for in the present record the essential facts are at least apparent. They are not smothered up under heaps of irrelevant detail so that their significance is lost".² Many critics, in an effort to be historical, try to narrow the horizon of Jesus' work and personality. This is an unwarranted method. We can account for the phenomenal expansion of the church only on the basis of a phenomenal Jesus. The story of his life has an irresistible power. Even in Jewish forms it forced its way into the gentile world. The oriental atmosphere of these forms would make them even more appealing to Greeks. "We are not to think of the Hellenising process as an attempt to

1. Scott, GT, 51.

2. Scott, GT, 52.

substitute Greek ideas for Jewish. The original apocalyptic forms were never abandoned".¹ Even when compared to the Hellenizing element in Paul's writings, the gospels show very little such influence. To Scott this is an incontrovertible argument for their antiquity and authenticity. The first-century scene demanded a literary form which was full of the appearance of mystery -- just the kind of form a critical scholar of today would most doubt, but which for that day was regarded as a mark of genuine historicity. "Conceptions were applied to the work of Christ, which were derived, more or less consciously, from the general religious thinking of the time".² These elements which mystify us were consciously introduced by the bearers of the tradition, because they were normative for that time. Their presence shows that our evangelists were trying hard to write what they thought to be good history. In another section of this paper we shall further develop this idea, namely, that the historicity of the gospel material is demonstrated by the fact that it was preserved for us in the characteristic forms of the day. What other forms could have been used? Certainly not those of the twentieth-century historian. The early Christians were religious men, dealing with a phenomenal leader, who gave them a religious message to preserve. They did their best to put that message, together with the events of the master's life,

1. Scott, GT, 103.

2. Scott, GT, 107.

and the original manuscript. The original manuscript
 was never printed. Even when compared to the
 existing element in the original, the original was very
 little more important. To make this is an important
 element for their study and understanding. The first
 century was devoted to history from which was full of the
 element of history -- just the kind of form a writer
 could at today would not doubt. But when the first
 was regarded as a work of genuine history. "Genuine
 was applied to the work of history, which was not
 or less valuable, from the general religious thinking of the
 time." These elements which apply to the present
 indicated by the nature of the material, because they were
 necessary for that time. Their presence shows that the
 original was being used to write what they thought to be
 good history. In another section of this paper we shall
 further develop this idea, namely, that the history of the
 gospel material is characterized by the fact that it was first
 written for us in the characteristic form of the day. That
 other forms could have been used. Certainly not those of the
 twentieth-century history. The early Christian was
 religious man, dealing with a personal leader, who gave them
 a religious message to preserve. They did their best to put
 that message, together with the events of the master's life,

into forms which would be accepted as historical by their contemporaries.

A great gulf separates Scott from such writers as Dibelius and Bultmann. He has outlined what ought to be the normal approach of a historian, and has put the gospels in an entirely different light. He allows what is obvious to be taken as obvious, at the same time explaining the presence of the mysterious. It is essential that we approach the gospels in some such way, if Formgeschichte is to be a useful tool.

In The Validity of the Gospel Record Scott has directly attacked the problem of Formgeschichte, and has defended the historicity of the gospels. Still, the form criticism of the book is less pronounced than the historical view already outlined. History, he says differs from a chronicle in that it has a point of view. Thus the gospels are examples of the true historical type. He warns us against "literary illusion", that is, the tendency to let things pass unnoticed in ordinary conversation, but to consider trivialities important when we see them in print. Thus the written gospels allow us to infer the nature of the earlier tradition. "The chief interest of the Gospels is historical".¹ Luke was concerned that Theophilus should know the facts. The evangelists took recourse to sources, tracing their historical material with a care that preserved even the exact words. Where are there three histories of today which use so much

1. Scott, VGR, 10.

identical language? Gospel differences are due to different sources, not to mutilation.

The historical message of the gospels is inseparable from their religious message. "They provide the basis for the Christian message, and their value as history cannot be separated from their religious value".¹ History preceded the message itself, not vice versa. "There is no reason to question that the things recorded are authentic, although at some points we can trace the ideas of a later time".² The accounts reach back to the earliest times. They are not, as some seem to think, a sudden after-thought when Jesus had been all but forgotten. The canonical versions of the gospels are late, but "they are made from material which existed, even in written form, in a much earlier time. They can be traced back to a tradition which must have been current in the church in Palestine almost from the beginning.... Both the record and the message went back to primitive days.... There was never a time when the church was neglectful of the life of Jesus and thought only of the message".³ Any other view of the situation leaves out the one distinctive feature of Christianity, namely, its founder. We know little of Moses, Buddha, or Zoroaster, but without Jesus there could be no Christianity. "This faith in Christ is the vital thing in Christianity, and it cannot be resolved into faith in a principle, or a symbol, or an imaginary being".⁴ "So by its

1. Scott, VGR, 25.
 2. Scott, VGR, 36.
 3. Scott, VGR, 40-41.
 4. Scott, VGR, 41.

identical language? Gospel differences are due to different sources, not to mutilation.

The historical message of the Gospels is inseparable from their religious message. "They provide the basis for the Christian message, and their value as history cannot be separated from their religious value." History provided the message itself, not vice versa. "There is no reason to question that the things recorded are authentic, although at some points we can trace the traces of a later time." The accounts refer back to the earliest times. They are not, as some seem to think, a sudden after-thought when Jesus had been all but forgotten. The canonical versions of the Gospels are late, but "they are late first material which existed, even in written form, in a much earlier time. They can be traced back to a tradition which must have been current in the church in Palestine almost from the beginning.... Both the texts and the message must have been primitive.... There was never a time when the church was neglectful of the life of Jesus and thought only of the message." Any other view of the apostolic leaves out the one distinctive feature of Christianity, namely, its founder. We know little of Jesus, or forgotten, but without Jesus there would be no Christianity. "This faith in Jesus is the vital thing in Christianity, and it cannot be separated into faith in a principle, or a symbol, or an imaginary being." "So by the

nature Christianity involved a knowledge of Jesus. Faith in him was impossible without some clear conception of what he was".¹ The gospel message and the gospel history are inseparable.

Scott denies that the community gave rise to the material, yet characterizes it as the sieve through which the material had to pass, resulting in the choice of some and rejection of other. The community is not creative. It only passes judgment on things created by individuals. The deciding community in this case was Aramaic and Palestinian, not Hellenistic. Jerusalem was the head of the church, and it was there that the tradition took shape immediately after the death of Jesus. To the members of that community, religion was everything. The record about Jesus was their common property. It was used in the public service. No research was necessary for the evangelists' work. The preservation of this material was purposeful, not the accident of casual preaching. "Is it conceivable that memories of Jesus were not preserved for their own sake, but only survived because they happened to be used now and then by preachers as illustrations? A theory so absurd on the very face of it ought never to have found its way into serious criticism".² It is possible that the earliest Christians sometimes mixed prophetic ecstasy with historical material, "Yet this exercise of the spiritual gifts....cannot have produced or even

1. Scott, VGR, 42.

2. Scott, VGR, 69.

...involvement in the knowledge of Jesus. ...
...the general message and the Gospel history ...

...the community gave rise to the ...
...as the clearest through which the ...
...in the choice of some and ...
...The community is not creative. It ...
...only history judged on things created by individuals. The ...
...in this case was historic and religious. ...
...was the head of the church, and ...
...the Christian church should immediately after ...
...to the members of that community. ...
...The church about Jesus was itself ...
...It was used in the public service. ...
...The ...
...for the evangelists' work. The ...
...of this material was important, not the ...
...It is impossible to ... of Jesus ...
...but only ...
...to be used now and then by ...
...A theory as above on the very fact of its ...
...into various ...
...the earliest Christian ...
...This ...
...of the ...

seriously modified it".¹ Nothing would be so welcomed as eyewitness remembrances about Jesus.

Thus Scott comes to the following conclusions, which are basic not only to his thought but to the work of our thesis:

a. The church's record was, in some sense, officially preserved. It arose early, and was not made up of late hit-or-miss recollections of one or two people.

b. The use of the record in public meeting guaranteed its continued accuracy. The community is a harsh censor.

c. Use in meeting would guarantee the preservation of those items most generally appreciated and useful.

d. Public use also explains the dominant devotional and religious mood of the traditional material.

e. Public use naturally invested the material with certain forms, typical of the day, and conducive to a dignified liturgical style. "The church service, then, was a determining factor in the moulding of the tradition".² This is one of Scott's chief themes in supporting the validity of the material. What the community preserved was true, accurate, and informative. "The instinct of the community has always been conservative".³ The close proximity of its members, its Jewish character, the democracy of its activities, and the expected return of Jesus -- all these checked possible changes of a radical sort. "There is every presumption, therefore, that the community in Palestine would preserve the Gospel

1. Scott, VGR, 71.

2. Scott, VGR, 80.

3. Scott, VGR, 85.

seriously modified it. Nothing would be as welcome as
a few more references about Jesus.
These points come to the following conclusions, which
are based not only on his thought but on the work of our friends
a. The church's record was, in some sense, officially
presented. It arose early, and was not made up of late
discovery or revelation of one or two people.
b. The use of the record in public meeting guaranteed
its continued accuracy. The community is a church.
c. Use in meeting would guarantee the preservation of
those items most generally appreciated and useful.
d. Public use also explains the dominant development and
religious mood of the traditional material.
e. Public use naturally invited the material with
certain forms, typical of the day, and conducive to a dignified
literary style. "The church service, then, was a dominant
factor in the molding of the tradition." This is one
of Hodge's chief reasons in supporting the validity of the
material. What the community preserved was true, accurate,
and informative. "The language of the community has always
been conservative." The close proximity of its members, its
fellowship character, the homogeneity of its activities, and the
expected return of Jesus -- all these checked possible changes
of a radical sort. "There is every presumption, therefore,
that the community in Palestine would preserve the Gospel

1. Hodge, p. 11.
2. Hodge, p. 11.
3. Hodge, p. 11.

tradition with little change".¹

f. The existence of the church presupposed definite knowledge about Jesus.

g. The message was unique. It did not sprout from nothing, but from a similarly unique personality.

h. The imperfections of the material are its guarantee of genuineness. "It was not fully consistent with the doctrines and practices which were now based on it; but as the historical record it had to be allowed to stand".² Isolated or contradictory sayings would not be there if the material were an invention; "...if there had been no fact there would have been no dissension".³

i. The Sitz im Leben is most naturally found in Jesus' own life. To place it in church activity is a strain on the material itself, for the words attributed to Jesus are not always in accord with church life.

From the above we learn some of the leading phases around which the discussion of historicity revolves. Not all these considerations are in the field of Formgeschichte, but most of them have a bearing on it. It must be admitted that Scott does not trust the final effectiveness of Formgeschichte. He feels that it sometimes argues from the unknown to the known, rather than vice versa. He thinks that the canonical gospels are too complex to fit any set of forms, and doubts

1. Scott, VGR, 89.

2. Scott, VGR, 98.

3. Scott, VGR, 104.

material with little gain."

1. The existence of the church presupposes belief.

material about belief.

2. The message was unique. It did not spring from

nothing, but from a uniquely divine personality.

3. The imperfection of the material and the knowledge

of men. "It was not fully consistent with the

doctrine and practice which were based on it; but as the

historical record is not to be allowed to stand isolated

or contradictory aspects would not be there if the material

were an invention. "...if there had been no fact there would

have been no discussion."

4. The Bible as a book is not naturally found in Jesus'

own life. To place it in church activity is a strain on the

material itself, for the words attributed to Jesus are not

always in accord with church life.

From the above we learn some of the leading phases

around which the discussion of historicity revolves. Not all

these considerations are in the field of historicity, but

most of them have a bearing on it. It must be admitted that

Scott does not treat the final effectiveness of these considerations.

He feels that if sometimes argues from the unknown to the

known, rather than vice versa. He thinks that the canonical

gospels are too complex to fit any sort of logic, and doubts

that formality proves much pro or con. Patient literary criticism is the only way to reach back of the gospels. However, he does recognize the importance of Formgeschichte in calling attention to the oral period, about the existence of which there can be no doubt. Jesus taught orally, and presumed that his words would be passed on in that way.¹

Contrary to the general run of critics, Scott lacks confidence in the sayings. They are "in character" for Jesus, but he thinks the poetic form is too studied and oracular to represent the ipsissima verba. Rather, it was superimposed by time on a highly pungent and direct type of speech. "It may therefore be assumed that in the process of transmission the sayings were remodelled. While the substance of the thought was retained, it was thrown into forms which defined it more sharply and at the same time made it easier to remember".² This was done purposely, but without consciousness of corrupting the record. No two eyewitnesses would agree on every word of a speech given by Jesus only a few days earlier. "We need not doubt that the thought was his, even though he may not have expressed it in just those terms. If it is argued that the different versions of a saying are proof that he never uttered it, we may fairly answer that they prove the very opposite. Several reporters are agreed that he spoke to that effect; and if they differ as to the words we can be all the more certain of the thought conveyed".³ In a sense

1. Cf. Mk. 3.14.
 2. Scott, VGR, 128.
 3. Scott, VGR, 132.

this is true, but I believe Scott bends over backwards when he doubts the possibility of recovering any ipsissima verba of Jesus. As others have suggested, Jesus probably said the same thing several times, and perhaps even required the disciples to memorize stock teachings. In this case some things would certainly be reported verbatim.

Scott admits that the study of form is valuable. But he rightly criticizes the cases in which theory precedes fact. In reaction against the skepticism of Dibelius and Bultmann he writes: "The forms of the Gospel narrative must indeed be taken into account; but on this evidence alone it is impossible to base any historical judgment".¹ It will be part of our task to show that this is not true. Indeed, Scott uses *Formgeschichte* in its correct sense when he writes such things as the following: "To our minds the forms appear artificial, but to those for whom they were intended they were natural, and a loose, flexible mode of narration would have caused misgivings. A story did not appear credible unless it was told in the fixed order, according to the set rules.... The form is a guarantee of the contents, and was imposed for that very purpose".² The fact that the material had definite form protected it against alteration, and made the facts easy to remember. The forms developed before the written period. They were works of art carried out by certain individuals, not

1. Scott, VGR, 135.

2. Scott, VGR, 140.

this is true, but I believe Scott knows very well that he
 doubts the possibility of preserving any integrity of
 form. As others have suggested, I am strongly inclined to
 agree with several lines, and perhaps even to suggest the
 addition to several of these lines. In this case, I
 think would certainly be reported verbatim.
 Scott knows that the story of form is not a
 he rightly outlines the cases in which theory precedes fact.
 In reaction against the opposition of Diction and Imagery
 he writes: "The form of the novel narrative must indeed be
 taken into account; but on this evidence alone it is impossible
 to have any historical judgment." It will be part of our
 task to show that this is not true. Indeed, Scott uses
 postmodernism in its narrow sense when he writes such
 things as the following: "To our minds the form appears
 essential, but to those for whom they were intended they were
 accidental, and a loose, flexible mode of narrative would have
 seemed altogether. A story did not appear essential unless it
 was told in the fixed order, according to the set rules....
 The form is a guarantee of the content, and was imposed for
 that very purpose." The fact that the material was definite
 form protected it against alteration, and made the form very
 to remember. The form developed before the written period.
 they were made of and carried out by certain individuals, not

by the church as a whole. "Form always implies a selection... Out of all that was known or rumored of the life and teaching of Jesus the church laid hold of those things which it most desired to keep".¹ What we have is not the left-over skimmed milk, but the cream of a large quantity of available material. We might have chosen other material -- but ancient tastes differed from ours. They were motivated by existing church conditions, by preference for incidents which pertained to cherished beliefs, by devotional values for their own sake, and by the needs of public worship or debate. "Their motive, it cannot be affirmed too strongly, was in the last resort a religious one. The message they proclaimed was bound up with the reality of the life of Jesus".²

The chief trouble in authenticating the tradition is that, when we have gone back as far as we can, we inevitably come to a period when "everything was unstable...".³ Indeed, Scott fears that the very first tradition was adulterated by conflicting reports of eyewitnesses and by plain forgetfulness. I reply to this that the gospels give us a different impression. Jesus was not just another lecturer come to town, but one who made such an impression upon his hearers that they could scarcely forget what he said.

Scott thinks that the first trouble was a real excess of material, much of it spurious. Out of this the leaders

1. Scott, VGR, 147.

2. Scott, VGR, 170.

3. Scott, VGR, 163.

picked what was reliable and useful. The following influences served to check corruption and preserve historicity: A. The censorship of eyewitnesses. B. The formation of the tradition on the Palestinian scene, which was the same scene in which Jesus taught. C. Jewish opposition would demand accuracy. D. For the Christians themselves the message had no meaning apart from the facts.

Since tradition was already in the form of units, it was easy for a compiler to exercise judgment without mutilating his material. "So the little anecdotal sections which make up our Gospels are not to be regarded as fragments, broken off from a narrative which was once complete. They represent the story of Jesus as it had always been told".¹

Scott is inclined to trust the grouping and chronology of the gospel material. The compilers could still check on some items; others fell naturally into place; and the whole was as chronological as material of this type easily could be. It is legitimate to group materials topically rather than chronologically, if the compiler chooses to follow that method.

In summary of Scott's work I wish to make clear the following points: A. His emphasis upon the inseparability of the Christian movement from the life of its founder is obvious. Movements do not develop by accident. B. He is interested chiefly in what might be called "general historicity" of the material. He doubts the importance of Formgeschichte in this

1. Scott, VGR, 181.

placed what was reliable and useful. The following information
 served to check corruption and preserve discipline. A. The
 membership of the organization. B. The formation of the organization
 in the organization seems, which was the same in which
 laws should be. C. The organization would be a necessary
 D. For the organization to receive the message and no message
 apart from the message.
 Since the organization was already in the form of an organization,
 the organization was a necessary to establish a system without making
 the organization. "The organization would be a necessary
 up for the organization to be regarded as a necessary. The organization
 off from a necessary which was once necessary. The organization
 the organization of the organization as it had always been said."
 The organization is inclined to create the organization and organization
 of the organization. The organization would still be on
 some level; others will naturally into place; and the organization
 was an organization and organization of this type really would be.
 It is important to know whether it is really rather than
 organizationally, it is the organization of the organization to follow the organization.
 In summary of the organization's work I wish to make clear the
 following points: A. His emphasis upon the responsibility of
 the organization to receive the life of the organization in order to
 forward it to the organization by accident. B. He is interested
 entirely in what might be called "general discipline" of the
 organization. He does not emphasize of organization in this

connection, yet uses the method quite freely. On this point he is anything but consistent. He claims that Formgeschichte may not lead to historical decisions, yet makes historical decisions on what appears to be a formgeschichtlich basis. C. He departs from most authorities in doubting the accuracy of the sayings. They represent for him the themes of Jesus, but not his words. The words come, however, from important Christian individuals rather than from the community. D. There is a tragic lack of Biblical references and illustrations, especially in The Validity of the Gospel Record. He talks about the material, but gives no evidence to support his statements. E. He attributes little value to rabbinic or Greek parallels.

Scott's contributions are a help in the field of our thesis -- especially his insistence upon finding the Sitz im Leben of the gospel material in the life of Jesus. He seems to have a nervous shyness of Formgeschichte, perhaps because of the influence of Dibelius and Bultmann. It will be our purpose to build more specific arguments upon some of his generalizations.

17. Miscellaneous.

Among the works which show a formgeschichtlich influence, or which deal with more or less restricted aspects of Formgeschichte, are the following:

conception, yet even the method which is used in this

point is very different from that which is used in the

historical method, yet even

historical method, on which we are to be a long way from

being. It is not from what is known in the history of

accuracy of the evidence. That is not the point

of issue, but the point is, the whole of the

important historical individuals who are known from the

community. It is not a single lack of historical references

and illustrations, especially in the history of the world

history. The point about the material, but gives no evidence

to support his statements. It is not a single lack of

to explain the whole of the

point is not a single lack of historical references

and illustrations, especially in the history of the world

history. The point about the material, but gives no evidence

to support his statements. It is not a single lack of

of the influence of historical references, but gives no

purpose to build new material arguments upon the basis of his

generalizations.

12. Historical method.

Among the works which show a long way from

or which deal with some of the most important aspects of the

historical method, are the following:

Le Problème du Miracle, by Anton Fridrichsen, views the gospels as unhistorical and not up to our literary standards. "The first Christians lived in the present. What interested them was the actual, transcendental reality -- the LORD JESUS". History had a place in early Christian thinking, but only a very minor place, namely, as "an act in the great drama of salvation". The miracles were introduced to persuade the Jews that Jesus was the Messiah, and to explain the mistake of the cross. Fridrichsen points out that there have been attacks on Jesus' miracles from the earliest time, e.g., "He casts out devils by Beelzebub". More recently the attack has been practical and psychological. This book interests us only because the author uses the formgeschichtlich method in tracing the history of miracle units in tradition.

Lyder Brun has written a work on the resurrection stories, under the title Auferstehung Christi in der urchristlichen Überlieferung. He minimizes the supposed differences in the tradition as held by Matthew-Mark and by Luke-John. He is at pains to point out that the resurrection stories are found in the usual synoptic style. There is nothing especially different or startling about them. They follow a definite scheme, yet a wide variety of forms is represented. If we set aside the matter of geographical location (in which the reporters appear to have no great interest), the forms of the resurrection stories are remarkable for their simplicity

1. Fridrichsen, FM, 17.

and directness.

Das formgeschichtliche Problem des Neuen Testaments, by Ludwig Koehler, reviews the historic trilogy of Dibelius, Bultmann, and Schmidt. Formgeschichte is viewed as both a literary and a historical discipline. Koehler is one of the few who allow Formgeschichte its valid place in making historical judgments. He regards the years from 40 A.D. to 50 A.D. as the active period in the formation of the tradition, arguing that the previous decade was too early for the existence of any need, and the decade from 50 A.D. to 60 A.D. too late to account for the nature of Mark only a few years afterward. In response to the first argument it must be pointed out that need does not always precede action. Early Christianity could have an interest in Jesus' life apart from the need for missionary materials, rules, etc.. Reacting against such a view as that of Kundsinn, Koehler doubts that it is now possible to identify just what needs led to the preserving of specific items in the tradition. He argues that the synoptic material has a valid historical core in the life of Jesus. "The actual words and works of Jesus are given as the starting point, as they live in the memory of eyewitnesses. This mass of memories is now latent. It is at hand, but it is not spoken forth. When does it find expression? For the most part one can say: a memory about a word or a deed of Jesus will be spoken forth when it helps

the church rightly to find its way in a practical question".¹ Toward the close of his work Koehler becomes more cautious, warning that pure Formgeschichte easily leads one astray like Dibelius and Bultmann. For a proper view of historicity, and to avoid unfounded skepticism, the New Testament problem must be kept in the field of historical criticism. But the materials themselves give a "rich occasion" for formgeschichtlich study, bringing the materials out of isolation and making many features understandable for the first time.

Shirley Jackson Case, while not really a form-critic, has approximated the general position of Formgeschichte when he wrote in his Jesus as follows: "At first the story of Jesus' life and teaching was a subject of informal conversation among his surviving friends. In the course of time portions of this early oral tradition were written down to be read for edification in the absence of a preacher whose memory could be drawn upon for this information. As the number of the disciples multiplied, there was a growing demand for suitable materials to use in the meetings of the congregations. In the meantime the ranks of the relatively small group that could personally recall memories of Jesus were destined to diminish, while the need for written records rapidly increased. At least one formal biography had taken shape about the year 70 A.D., and before the close of the century several others

1. Koehler, PT, 30.

had appeared".¹ This paragraph is notable for the fact that Case dares to speak of the synoptics as "formal biographies". He deems the tradition vital enough that until the time of Mark it did not need to be reduced to strict written form. However, this does not deny the possibility of earlier written tradition.

In his later years Loisy turned toward Formgeschichte. Like Bultmann, he felt that practically nothing can be known about Jesus from the historical standpoint. Yet he was very definite about the existence of Jesus. The story is no myth. He stresses the prophetic-liturgical aspect of the material, and in the case of Luke argues that a clumsy redactor about 130 A.D. largely destroyed what authentic material Luke had written into his Gospel and Acts. Scott refers to the latter idea as part of the "freak literature" about the New Testament.

Maurice Goguel in his Life of Jesus says of Formgeschichte: "Less original than it believes itself to be, and than it says it is, this school has at least had the merit of welding all kinds of scattered ideas into a coherent whole, and of drawing very definite conclusions from them...."² Among these conclusions he includes: A. That the settings for the gospel narratives are artificial. B. That the gospels are not strictly historical documents. C. That they are closely related to the life of the church. Upbraiding

1. Case, J, 7.

2. Goguel, *LJ*, 58.

and others. This paragraph is notable for the fact that
some three or four of the synopses are "factual descriptions".
He shows the transition from the original to the final
text is the result of the need to be reduced to a single
version, this does not deny the possibility of further
written tradition.

In his later years Goguel turned toward postmodernism.
Like many, he felt that practically nothing can be known
about Jesus from the historical standpoint. Yet he was very
delicate about the existence of Jesus. The story is so
incomplete the historical-critical method of the material,
and in the case of Jesus, that a simple reduction about
150 A.D. largely destroyed what authentic material Jesus had
written into his Gospel and Acts. Goguel refers to the
later Jesus as part of the "Greek literature" about the New
Testament.

Emil Goguel in his Life of Jesus says of Jesus:
"Jesus original: 'Jesus original' that is believed itself to be, and
that is not it is, this Gospel has at least had the merit
of setting all kinds of scattered ideas into a coherent whole,
and of drawing very definite conclusions from them...."
These three conclusions he indicates: A. That the Gospels for
the Gospel narratives are authentic. B. That the Gospels
are not merely historical documents. C. That they are
closely related to the life of the church. D. That they are
theological.

Bultmann for first denying the possibility of writing a life of Jesus and then promptly setting to work to write one, Goguel gloomily brands Formgeschichte as "the expression of a passing mood of weariness and discouragement".¹

Goguel is right when he says about Paul, "He did not take the trouble to tell the Gospel story because he was sure that his readers would know at least the elements of it: nor did he try to prove -- (what no one doubted) -- that Jesus had actually lived, but only that he was the Christ; for this the Jews refused to accept, while the pagans regarded it as 'foolishness'".² He supports the view that the gospel existed during the oral period in small units, and that the traditions were quite different from the non-Biblical sources with which they are usually compared. Comparisons with Jewish and Greek literature he considers largely unfruitful. "A comparison is not an explanation".³ The behavior of oral tradition cannot be reduced to definite laws. We can only note more or less general tendencies, e.g., to group an independent unit with other units of corresponding theme. While he admits that cult activity had some influence on the forms, that influence was adaptation and not creation. The origin of the material cannot be explained in this way.

Goguel tries to avoid arbitrary views of Formgeschichte, noting that, "In reality, there are only what Dibelius has

1. Goguel, LJ, 60.
 2. Goguel, LJ, 127.
 3. Goguel, LJ, 127.

called mixed forms...".¹ This statement is overdrawn, but it is a wholesome warning. On such a basis he despairs of anything more than fragmentary historical facts. He thinks the early Christians were more interested in Jesus' teachings than in the facts of his life. Only in the teachings does he find form especially noteworthy. "The art in the words and sayings of Jesus is wholly instinctive. It is not the result of an artificial method. There is no striving after effect... In him the style is so marvellously adapted to the content that it does not attract attention".² Even if Jesus did not invent his forms, he used them more effectively than any one else has done.

In the Harvard Theological Review³ Goguel summarizes the theses of Formgeschichte as follows: A. The historical outline of the gospels is strictly artificial. The units are not actually related as the gospels indicate. B. The gospels are not historical, but religious documents, out of the religious milieu of early Christianity. C. The forms are grouped according to functions of the primitive church, e.g., preaching, teaching apology, missions, etc.. D. Essentially, Formgeschichte supports historical agnosticism.

We cannot accept these findings as entirely correct, but they show a need for this thesis in order to counteract

1. Goguel, LJ, 166.
 2. Goguel, LJ, 281.
 3. Goguel, PJ.

valued almost equally... This statement is overstated, but it is a wholesome warning. On such a basis the doctrine of anything more than fragmentary historical facts. The early Christians were more interested in Jesus' teachings than in the facts of his life. Only in the last few years has the fact been especially noteworthy. The fact is the fact and nothing of them is wholly insignificant. It is not the result of an artificial method. There is no driving effect... In his style is no remarkably adapted to the content that it does not attract attention. Even if Jesus did not invent the story, he used them more effectively than any one else has done.

In the History of the Christian Church, Vol. I, pp. 1-100, the names of the evangelists are followed: A. The historical outline of the gospel is strictly historical. The outline is not actually written as an historical document, but of course is not historical, but religious documents, but of the religious value of early Christianity. C. The Gospel are grouped according to the periods of the primitive church, e.g., preaching, teaching, mission, etc. D. Generally, the evangelists are regarded as historical documents. We cannot accept these findings as entirely correct, but they show a need for this study in order to understand

1. Gospel, 1st, 1st.
2. Gospel, 1st, 1st.
3. Gospel, 1st, 1st.

the "historical agnosticism" or "historical skepticism" which is too frequently identified with Formgeschichte.

Robert Henry Lightfoot, in History and Interpretation in the Gospels, recognizes the growing validity of the formgeschichtlich point of view, especially in viewing Mark as a compilation. He stresses the oral aspect of Formgeschichte, and the importance of the oral period. It was only natural for the early church to collect items which were related in theme, and to introduce the collection by an editorial statement. More important is this conclusion: "It is noticeable that Saint Matthew and Saint Luke, whom we may call our earliest commentators on Saint Mark, have no scruple in replacing his connecting links by others which they think more suitable. They deal much more freely with the editorial connexions in Saint Mark than with the contents of the sections".¹ That is, Lightfoot recognizes that the forms were established, were in some measure recognized as historical, and were not so easily tampered with as were the editorial splicings. Here, indeed, is a discovery.

Lightfoot's classification of forms includes special emphasis on sayings (apothegms or paradigms) and miracle stories (Novellen). He urges that even Mark includes more interpretation than was formerly believed; also, that the Messianic secret is a major clue to understanding Mark. He concludes that the gospels were written to answer

1. Lightfoot, HIG, 39.

the "historical" character of "historical" events.

is not fundamentally identical with the historical.

Robert Henry Lightfoot, in *History and Interpretation*

in the *Journal*, comments on the growing reality of the

historical character of the past, especially in the modern

as a collection. He stresses the fact that the past

is not, and the importance of the past period. It is

only natural for the past to be seen in the light

of the present in the past, and to introduce the collection by an

editorial statement. More important is this statement:

"It is undeniable that the past is not the same as the

past, and our present knowledge of the past is not the

same as in the past. The past is not the same as the

past, and our present knowledge of the past is not the

same as in the past. The past is not the same as the

past, and our present knowledge of the past is not the

same as in the past. The past is not the same as the

past, and our present knowledge of the past is not the

same as in the past. The past is not the same as the

past, and our present knowledge of the past is not the

same as in the past. The past is not the same as the

past, and our present knowledge of the past is not the

same as in the past. The past is not the same as the

past, and our present knowledge of the past is not the

same as in the past. The past is not the same as the

R. H. Lightfoot, *ibid.*, p. 152.

intellectual and practical problems of the church, e.g., Why did Jesus die? His view of the passion material is standard for Formgeschichte. Indeed, as far as Formgeschichte is concerned, the book involves little but tertiary material. Its chief contribution is in the matter of Marcan interpretation. In spite of the fact that he conceives Mark's aim as interpretative rather than historical, he recognizes that the historical material was handled with great care.

In his recent Introduction to the New Testament, Edgar J. Goodspeed has again called attention to the importance of unwritten scribal tradition. It would have been natural to treat the words of Jesus in the same way. He even argues that the logia of Matthew were unwritten, translating the famous Papias phrase with the word "composed" so as to indicate the collection was a body of oral material. Such a view would tend to dissociate the logia from Q, and to revive the old oral tradition theory. Goodspeed sees no reason to presume that Mark had any written sources whatever. "Built up it no doubt was, but primarily from memories of Peter's preaching, enriched with such matters as the fate of John, 6.17-29, and possibly the core of the Little Apocalypse, chapter 13. But there is no sufficient reason to suppose that even these came to the evangelist's hands in written form".¹

In comment we may state our contention that Formgeschichte is not bound by any of the traditional solutions of the synoptic

1. Goodspeed, INT, 155.

problem. It is independent of them, because it turns our attention even farther back into the period of undoubted oral tradition.

18. Conclusions.

The foregoing review of Formgeschichte indicates the wide variation of opinion as to its influence in the field of historical judgments. This difference of opinion is not so marked as it first appears, especially when we consider the temperaments of the critics represented. Those who doubt that Formgeschichte can support gospel historicity are mostly men who have already made up their minds negatively on the whole subject of historicity. Rightly used, Formgeschichte makes a real contribution. In making that contribution evident, we have been forced to review a great deal of chaff along with the wheat. Later sections will deal with these questions more specifically. Meantime, there are certain points which we ought to keep constantly in mind.

a. The notion that the gospel forms are a product of the later Christian community can be discarded in view of these considerations: A. If the community were actively constructing such items, we should look for a vast increase in the number and length of certain stock stories in the later gospels. Matthew and Luke do not show this to be a fact. When compared with Mark, allowances for Q material

being made, we are surprised at their conservatism. This is a direct contrast to the later pseudo-gospels, which actually grew out of a legendary atmosphere and show the Christian imagination freely at work. B. If the church freely invented stories or sayings to answer its specific needs, why is there none on such pressing problems as the gentile mission, the theological significance of the cross, the necessity for circumcision, or the organization of churches? The invention theory utterly falls down. What we have is a collection of form-units far removed from any of the early community needs except that of instruction about the life and works of Jesus. For such material there were ample eyewitnesses during the oral period. The gospel accounts find their best Sitz im Leben in the life of Jesus himself. As Taylor has put it, "If Bultmann is right, Christian imagination was potent where it was least needed, feeble or wanting where silence called for its exercise; it left undone the things which it ought to have done, and did the things it had no need to do".¹ C. The extreme view rests solely upon subjective considerations, and leaves out of consideration the eyewitnesses. Great thoughts and sayings are the creations of individuals -- not of crowds. The creative genius of the community is vastly over-estimated.

1. Taylor, FGT, 86.

being made, as is supposed at their conversation. This is a direct contrast to the later pseudo-gospel, which usually gives out of a legendary atmosphere and then the Christian imagination freely at work. If the church itself inserted stories or sayings to answer its special needs, why is there none on such pressing problems as the Gentile mission, the theological significance of the cross, the necessity for apostleship, or the organization of the church? The invention theory already tells down. But we have in a collection of four gospels far removed from any of the early community needs except that of instruction about the life and work of Jesus. For each particular issue there is a specific statement during the early period. The gospel accounts that their work was done in the life of Jesus himself. As Taylor has put it, "If Matthew is right, Christian imagination was present where it was least needed, beside or wanting where silence called for its exercise; it left undone the things which it ought to have done, and did the things it had no need to do." The extreme view rests solely upon subjective considerations, and leaves out of consideration the question of great thoughts and sayings and the creation of individuals -- not of events. The creative genius of the community is vastly over-estimated.

D. There are New Testament examples to show that the early Christians carefully distinguished between the words of Jesus and of others. The question brought up in I Corinthians 7.10-12 offered the finest possible opportunity for "community formation" or editorial incursions. Paul carefully avoided both, and kept the traditional words of Jesus pure.

b. The importance to be attached to non-Biblical parallels must not be overestimated. One can easily find parallels to the words of any great man. All teachers use proverbs and illustrations. Likeness does not necessarily indicate copying. This was especially true in the early centuries. Occasional sayings from Jewish tradition might be introduced among the words of Jesus as explanatory matter, but that hundreds of such sayings were introduced (so as to distort the bulk of the Jesus material) is beyond the realm of possibility. We shall see that the probability is, if anything, just the reverse. Chronologically, the rabbinic sources are more likely to be copied from Jesus than vice versa. Piebig's work is of outstanding importance on this score.

c. We have repeatedly mentioned a certain self-authenticating note in the gospel materials. There is an aesthetic homogeneity to the material. Even when we allow that the original tradition is affected by translation from Aramaic, by adaptation and compilation, or by dominant religious interests of the Christian group, these self-authenticating aspects are no less pronounced. The nature of

the subject matter leads to the same conclusion. The vivid scene of Jesus plucking grain is a story from real life, and could hardly be the work of a community trying to justify its own Sabbath practice. Again, it is more reasonable to believe that the story of the Widow's Mites is based on fact, than to believe that it is a product of community imagination. The gospels have a single theme -- to tell about Jesus. Any other "influences" are subjected to this dominant theme. We must consider what the gospels do not say, along with what they do say.

d. The primitive, Palestinian, Jewish aspect of the material is evident on every hand. By no stretch of the historical method can we agree with those who place the origin of the materials in Hellenistic circles. It would be like a Vermont farmer writing a book in the style of Lao-tze.

e. The Fourth Gospel offers more interpretation than the synoptics, and more evidence of the author's religious and spiritual environment. It does not carry on the form-unit arrangement so characteristic of the synoptics. These considerations do not mean that John's material is necessarily unhistorical. They merely indicate that it has a different setting, and does not offer a constructive field for the form-critic. Perhaps John represents a phase of Jesus' work that the synoptics neglected, or perhaps it preserves the old-age reminiscences of an eyewitness, without

the reduction to form-units which a period of oral tradition would have effected. In any event, it is largely outside the field of our immediate inquiry.

In the course of criticizing what others have written, we have already made a good deal of progress in showing how Formgeschichte demonstrates the historicity of the gospel material. In succeeding chapters we shall press these discoveries further, and search out new fields of exploration along the same lines.

- B. The place and influence of Formgeschichte;
a fresh approach, yet definitely related to
the whole body of modern New Testament research.

The foregoing study leads to a further question: What place does Formgeschichte hold in the field of Biblical scholarship, and what influence does it exert? Does it stand by itself, or does it readily fit into the whole field of Biblical research?

The names of the proponents of Formgeschichte constitute no mean list. Starting in Germany, the school has spread to England and to America, and has been blessed with leading names along the way. The fathers of the movement, Dibelius and Bultmann, have retained a reputation for the most complex analysis of the forms. But they are so skeptical that their value to the entire field of New Testament research has been

The reduction to two-thirds which a period of one year
would have effected. In any event, it is largely outside

the field of our immediate inquiry.

In the course of this discussion, what should have been

to have already made a good deal of progress in showing how

the fundamental principles of the theory of the

material. It is necessary to show that the

theoretical part of the theory is not only of importance

along the same lines.

B. The same and influence of the theory of the
theoretical part of the theory is not only of importance
the whole body of the theory is not only of importance

The foregoing theory is not only of importance

theoretical part of the theory is not only of importance

theoretical part of the theory is not only of importance

theoretical part of the theory is not only of importance

theoretical part of the theory is not only of importance

The nature of the theory is not only of importance

theoretical part of the theory is not only of importance

theoretical part of the theory is not only of importance

theoretical part of the theory is not only of importance

theoretical part of the theory is not only of importance

theoretical part of the theory is not only of importance

theoretical part of the theory is not only of importance

quite limited. The work of Easton, Pascher, Taylor, and others, has taken a middle course, and has brought the new approach into a vital relationship with the whole field of Biblical study. They have demonstrated that Formgeschichte is an additional tool worthy of inclusion in an already well-filled chest. In fact, one of the most attractive features about the formgeschichtlich approach is this: The scholar may utilize it without throwing away all his established ideas and methods. Formgeschichte does not deny any special view of the synoptic problem except that of verbal inspiration -- which is almost universally denied anyhow. Its work is complementary, not exclusive. It makes little difference whether one favors the two-source theory or one of the older theories. He can still study the literary form of the material. However, it is in conjunction with the two-source theory and a revised oral tradition theory that Formgeschichte is able to accomplish most. The general conclusions of the two-source theory are now widely accepted. On the other hand, there can be no doubt that the very earliest period knew the material only in the form of oral tradition. Thus Formgeschichte has the unique advantage of approaching the material from an entirely new angle. It nowhere forces us to adopt an unnatural view of the synoptic problem.

Some form-critics, in an effort to be original, have become quite eclectic. Grant, for example, outlines the growth

of Mark thus: ¹ A. The passion narrative. B. Controversies with Jewish authorities, intended to explain the death and passion. C. Petrine elements. D. Examples of Jesus' teaching from Q or oral tradition, or both. E. The little apocalypse. F. Narratives from current oral tradition. G. The final fitting together of the units in their natural order. No one can prove the truth or error of this unusual scheme. But Formgeschichte only allows such a suggestion -- it certainly does not force it. Formgeschichte can live happily with almost any view of the synoptic problem. It deals with the material itself rather than theories about the material. Thus the form-critics are notable for their lack of unanimity.

The great contribution of Formgeschichte is that it bridges the uncertain years from the crucifixion until the first gospel documents were written. In this effort it has little competition, for there is no other means of studying that shadowy period in a scholarly manner.

It is significant that the new method directs our attention toward those elements in the gospels which have been largely overlooked by traditional critics. Dodd has spoken of the latter thus: "They were dominated by a too narrow view of history, and in their 'quest of the historical Jesus' they put aside with something like contempt anything which might conceivably be attributed to the thought and

1. Grant, GG.

experience of the early church, trying in this way to arrive at a substratum of bare fact. In doing so, they were rejecting elements of prime value for the understanding of the Gospels....because a narrowly literary criticism left an inevitable gap between the facts of the life of Jesus and their earliest literary record -- a gap offering tempting opportunities for guesswork. In so far as the gap is being closed by scientific study of the pre-literary tradition, the way is being opened for a more adequate interpretation".¹

Formgeschichte has given an impetus to the investigation of the very earliest tradition. Certain phases of study which had been largely abandoned have now appeared again. For example, the question of oral tradition as a dependable means for transmitting historical material has been reopened. The contrasts between narrative and discourse units have been clarified. John has come to stand more alone than ever. But the synoptics have been bound closer together by an understanding of the laws of literary history which unite them, and all three have been projected back upon the earliest mass of oral tradition. Questions about Q, Mark's use of Q, and the possibility of other written sources for Mark, have been placed in a new light. It is surprising that the greatest question of all, namely, the historicity of the gospel story about Jesus, has received comparatively little attention. Dibelius probably felt that he had settled the

1. Dodd, The Present Task in New Testament Studies, 21.

statements of the early church, trying in this way to arrive
 at a reconstruction of the text. In doing so, they were
 rejecting elements of prime value for the understanding of the
 gospel... because a narrowly literary criticism left an
 insurmountable gap between the facts of the life of Jesus and
 their earliest literary record -- a gap which has been
 the traditional barrier for generations. In so far as the gap is being
 closed by scientific study of the pre-literary tradition, the
 gap is being opened for a more adequate interpretation.
 The investigation has given an impulse to the investiga-
 tion of the very earliest tradition. Certain phases of
 study which had been largely neglected have now appeared
 again. For example, the question of oral tradition has a
 dependence upon the investigation of historical material has been
 reopened. The contrast between narrative and discourse
 which have been neglected. There has come an effort to study
 them over. But the hypotheses have been found almost everywhere
 by an understanding of the facts of literary history which
 will show, and all three have been provided back upon the
 consistent basis of oral tradition. Questions about G. W. H. G.
 use of G. and the possibility of other written sources for
 G. have been placed in a new light. It is surprising that
 the greatest question of all, namely, the identity of the
 gospel story about Jesus, has received comparatively little
 attention.

1. Paul, The Gospel Man in His Historical Situation, 67.

question -- but his settlement was too extreme to be accepted. Most of the English and American scholars who have worked in the field have emphasized the literary rather than the historical findings of the new method. Hence, the inquiry of this paper seems eminently in order.

Formgeschichte has issued a vital challenge to the whole field of New Testament study. No introduction is complete without an extensive discussion of this new discipline. But the challenge is a friendly, constructive one. It is the challenge of a method which offers help rather than hindrance.

C. The sources with which Formgeschichte must work;
analogies in rabbinic and Greek literature.

While Formgeschichte must consider the question of sources for the gospels, that is not its chief interest. It is often assumed that this type of criticism necessarily gives a large place to oral tradition up until a very late period. This is not true. No one doubts that oral tradition was the means of preserving the story about Jesus during the first years. Just when oral tradition changed to written tradition is of no great moment for our purpose. Rather, we want to learn when the tradition became fixed, regardless of its oral or written nature.

question -- but his intention was too extreme to be accepted.
Most of the English and American scholars who have worked in
the field have emphasized the literary rather than the
historical aspects of the new method. Hence, the history of
this paper seems entirely in order.
Polemicalism has raised a vital challenge to the
whole field of new Testament study. We introduce it
not only without an extensive discussion of its own significance
but the challenge is a friendly, suggestive one. It is
the challenge of a method which offers help rather than
hindrance.

2. The sources with which polemicalism must work
analyses in relation to Greek literature.

While polemicalism must consider the question of
sources for the gospels, there is not the same interest.
It is often assumed that this type of criticism necessarily
gives a large place to oral tradition up until a very late
period. This is not true. We see sources that are familiar
and we mean of preserving the story about Jesus during the
first years. Just from oral tradition changed to written
tradition is of no great moment for our purpose. Rather, we
will be aware when the tradition becomes fixed, regardless of
its oral or written nature.

Just why can it be said that Formgeschichte does not necessarily assume oral forms at a late period? Merely because the historical facts show more evidence of writing in that period than we are usually willing to allow. The investigation of koine Greek has brought to light thousands of receipts, household market lists, and all sorts of humble documents on papyri. Most of them appear to have been written by ordinary tradespeople. They are full of errors, erasures, and misspelled words. More people could write in the first century than we generally suppose. We talk much about the spread of Greek culture, yet there is still a certain branch of New Testament scholarship which lives upon the assumption that all early Christians were illiterates and morons. To be sure, no stenographers followed Jesus. But it is not necessary to assume that oral tradition alone preserved the form-units until Mark's time. Oral tradition gave them their characteristic forms (as the forms themselves are our best witness), but they were probably written down earlier than most critics believe. Our contention is this: Oral tradition, true to Oriental style, preserved the words and deeds of Jesus in accurate forms, and gave those forms their characteristic stamp. Then, at just what time we do not know, written accounts joined in the preservation of the tradition. Thus both forces worked to preserve, not to destroy.

That way can it be said that Ptolemaeus does not
 necessarily mean any force at a late period? Surely
 because the alchemical texts show some evidence of writing in
 that period than we are usually willing to allow. The
 investigation of kind Greek has brought to light thousands
 of writings, hundreds of which are, and all sorts of human
 documents on paper. Even of these some do have been
 written by ancient Ptolemaeus. They are full of errors,
 omissions, and misstatements. Some people would write in
 the first century than we generally suppose. So late much
 about the end of Greek culture, yet there is still a
 certain amount of the Ptolemaean culture which lives upon
 the examples that all early Ptolemaean were illiterate and
 ignorant. To be sure, as Ptolemaeus followed them, but
 it is not necessary to assume that oral tradition alone
 preserved the Ptolemaean until Ptolemaeus' time. Oral tradition
 had been their characteristic form for the Ptolemaean
 are not less ancient, but they were probably written down
 earlier than most other beliefs. Our tradition is this:
 Oral tradition, true to Oriental style, preserved the words
 and sense of Ptolemaeus in accurate form, and gave some force
 their characteristic stamp. True, as that may also be so
 not many, written accounts joined in the preservation of the
 tradition. These were forces which so preserved, but so
 destroy.

1
Wm. Flinders Petrie¹ has declared that the spread of Christianity would demand some sort of written accounts quite early, perhaps in Antioch by the year 42 A.D., in Asia Minor by 50 A.D., and in Greece soon after. Although the rabbinic style of teaching assured a trustworthy transmission of the material for the period immediately following 30 A.D., the Greek did not pride himself as did the Jew upon remembering whole volumes with verbatim accuracy. Thus, in view of the amount of writing Paul did and the meagre references he made to the facts of Jesus' life, a good case can be made for the need of gospel writings before 60 A.D.. The familiar passage in Luke 1.1 assures us that "many" had tried their hands at writing the gospel account. It is altogether probable that Luke's work was a result of the insufficiency of these writings.

Arthur Temple Cadoux quotes Sanday's reflection upon the relative dependability of spoken and written accounts in the gospel period: "It must be remembered that the methods of ancient scholarship make it probable that if a writer was using written sources, his work would show more traces of his own diction than if he was using oral tradition. For in what is known by heart words and facts tend to persist in the mind together. But in compilation from written sources, ancient practice was not as accurate as modern. The modern compiler copies word for word, but in the ancient world he would not work with his original in front of him, but would look at it at

1. In Petrie, GG.

Mr. Lindsay's thesis has been that the spread of

Christianity would have been a part of a wider movement

which early, perhaps in the first century A.D., in Asia

Minor in the A.D., and in Europe soon after. Although the

Christian style of teaching started a completely new

of the material for the period immediately following 50 A.D.,

the church did not write itself as did the new movement

whole various with various movements. Thus, in view of the

amount of writing Paul did and the many references he made

to the Jews of Jerusalem, it is a fact that he wrote for the

most of gospel writings before 50 A.D. The Jewish message

in Luke (1:1) assumes as that "many" had tried their hands at

writing the gospel account. It is also a fact that

Luke's work was a result of the insubstantiality of these writings.

Another factor which makes Lindsay's conclusion more

the relative dependability of gospel and written accounts in

the gospel period: "It must be remembered that the methods of

ancient record-keeping make it probable that if a writer was

using written sources, his work would show more traces of his

own dialect than if he was using oral tradition. For in that

is shown by their words and facts tend to persist in the mind

together. But in composition from written sources, material

material was not as accurate as spoken. The modern compiler

could copy for words, but in the ancient world he would not

work with his original in front of him, but would look at it as

intervals, probably reading a paragraph through and trusting to memory to get the content of it into his own work".¹

Cadoux points out that in this way the diction of the compiler would be most prominent in the least common elements of his sources, but that the well-known and striking features of their style would be preserved. These observations of Sanday and Cadoux sound reasonable enough. But if Matthew and Luke used Mark in this way, certainly they stayed very close to their original in preserving historical fact.

A general examination of the two later synoptics would suggest that their difference from Mark might very well be explained in this way. Such a method as Sanday suggests would account for the decreasing amount of detail in the later writings, yet allow verbatim accuracy in important passages. The difficulty with Cadoux's theory is that, after he has shown how a compiler using written sources would not exactly reproduce those sources, he seeks to recover with hair-splitting accuracy the three written documents he claims to find back of Mark. A greater inconsistency could not be imagined.²

Cadoux's study does aid us to this extent: The very presence of duplicate narratives in Mark, such as those of Mark 6.30-44 (Feeding Five Thousand) and Mark 8.1-10 (Feeding Four Thousand), indicates that Mark was a compiler who

1. Cadoux, SG, 27; quoting Sanday, Oxford Studies in the Synoptic Problem, 18.

2. His argument for three sources is based on supposed conflation and redundancies in Mark.

harmonized his sources without destroying them. Luke purports to write on a historical basis, and his "Great Omission" looks like a historical correction. Yet a general comparison of Mark 2-10 with Luke 10-17 will show every favor to Mark, as far as order and arrangement are concerned. When we take into account other possible sources such as Q and L, the discrepancies between Matthew-Luke and Mark may be explained on the same basis. They sought to retain the integrity of all their sources, thereby appearing to handle Mark carelessly.

Returning to Mark and his two stories of feeding the multitude, let us add that the presence of these two stories is a token of the conservative approach of the compiler. He is willing to include two stories almost alike. He is willing to let the disciples ask, "Whence shall one be able to fill these men with bread here in a desert place?", even after they are supposed to have seen him feed a greater crowd only a few days before. He is willing to do almost anything except garble the accounts as he has received them. The very discrepancy between the stories is evidence that the tradition had great age and was well fixed in the community. This is especially true if we allow that Mark used written sources here. It indicates that the variations in oral traditions, upon which the written variations were based, must have occurred very early indeed. We have, then, two versions of the story, but only one form -- for the literary forms of

maintained his own view about the origin of the
 to write on a historical basis, and his "Great Britain" looks
 like a historical contribution. Yet a general comparison of
 with the other two will show every trace of error; as
 far as order and arrangement are concerned. There is also
 into account other possible sources such as A. and B. The
 relationship between the two and their way of explaining
 on the same basis. They seem to retain the integrity
 of all their sources, thereby according to their own
 principles.

According to Mark and his two notions of feeding the
 animals, it is said that the presence of these two stories
 is a token of the comparative approach of the compiler. He
 is willing to include two stories almost alike. He is willing
 to let the compiler ask, "Where shall one be able to tell
 those two with great ease in a desert place?", even after they
 are supposed to have been his food a greater crowd only a
 few days before. He is willing to be almost anything except
 to let the compiler ask as he has received them. The very
 discrepancy between the stories is evidence that the tradition
 had great age and was well fixed in the community. This is
 especially true if we allow that Mark used written sources.
 It indicates that the tradition in oral tradition,
 upon which the written version was based, must have
 occurred very early indeed. We have, then, the version of
 the story, but only one form -- for the literary form of

Mark 6.30-44 and of Mark 8.1-10 are identical, including the picture of the hungry multitude, the compassion of Jesus, the concern of the disciples, the small amount of available food, the desert environment, the seating of the people, the miracle, and the gathering of remnants. It is a typical miracle form in each case. From the fact that Mark carefully preserves both versions we can draw the following conclusions: A. Mark was not bound by form-theology -- if he had been, one version would have been sufficient to satisfy his need. That is, Formgeschichte would make a mistake by accusing Mark of beating his stories into a given literary form merely because it was popular in his day. Recognition that Mark was not a mere tool of his materials is the starting point of our investigation. B. As a historian of the first-century type, Mark felt compelled to retain both versions of this story, even though they were very much alike. He was exceedingly careful in reproducing the material as he received it, even to the use of different Greek words for "basket". If his sources were written, he copied carefully; if oral, it appears that in Mark's time the forms and versions were so well fixed as to allow no tampering. One way or another, the very earliest historical traditions had been preserved verbatim. Such variations as occurred were early, slight, and in detail only. They did not affect the essential points of the story or the form. Forgetting for the moment

1. Details will be further considered in a later section.

that 5.1-5.4 and of fact 5.1-5.4 are identical, including the
 picture of the hungry multitude, the suggestion of Jesus,
 the content of the dialogue, the words of the disciples,
 too, the direct environment, the setting of the people, the
 miracle, and the gathering of the people. It is a typical
 miracle story in each case. From the fact that the
 carefully preserved text versions we can draw the following
 conclusions: 1. The text was not known by the evangelists -- it
 has been, and version would have been entitled to modify
 his text. 2. The text, however, would have been modified by
 someone else of having his version had a given literary
 form early because it was popular in his day. 3. The version
 that Mark was not a mere copy of his material is the starting
 point of our investigation. 4. As a historian of the
 first-century story, Mark's text compelled to retain both
 versions of this story, even though they were very much alike.
 He was undoubtedly careful in reproducing the material as he
 received it, even to the use of different Greek words for
 "baker". It is known that Mark's text was written, he noted carefully;
 it oral, it appears that in Mark's time the form and version
 were so well fixed as to allow no tampering. One way of
 another, the very earliest historical traditions had been
 preserved verbatim. Even variations as occurred were early,
 slight, and in detail only. They did not affect the essential
 points of the story or the form. 5. The version for the moment
 1. Details will be further considered in a later section.

whether the miracle "just couldn't happen" (which is not scientific investigation, but opinion), the very preservation of discrepancies in our parallel sources marks the materials as of great age and worthy of serious, minute consideration.

Mark frequently used words which are both rare and out of accord with his general vocabulary.¹ These indicate that our sources themselves depended upon other sources, written or oral, which the evangelist faithfully reproduced. That this is true, and that these sources enjoyed a reliable form-history back to the very time of the crucifixion, is the contention of this paper.

Thus it becomes evident that the gospels themselves, as they now exist, must constitute our chief sources. Formgeschichte stands on its own feet in approaching these sources, and does not depend upon any particular solution of the synoptic problem or any special view of the sources back of Mark. Nevertheless, all the investigators bear in mind the general acceptance of the two-source theory as a working explanation of synoptic relations, with perhaps more than usual emphasis upon the possibility of single tradition in the case of Luke. Only by accepting the general findings of the two-source theory is it possible to discover from a comparison of Mark and Matthew-Luke any of the rules of form-history. On no other basis have we any materials for comparison, except as we compare the canonical gospels with

1. See page 351.

Hebrew analogies or with the obviously second-rate apocryphal materials.

The possibility of much tradition still in the purely oral stage as late as 80 A.D. or 85 A.D. is one of the unavoidable offerings of Formgeschichte. However, we must not make this shapeless body of oral tradition a catch-all for troublesome bits of text. The period in which Formgeschichte worked best is the period prior to the writing of Mark -- especially the very earliest years, from the crucifixion until perhaps 40 A.D. or 50 A.D.. For this reason the historical investigation will confine itself almost solely to Mark, the earliest of the gospels and the one having the best appearance of a historical framework. This is the method of all formgeschichtlich investigators, without exception. They operate on Mark first, drawing from comparisons between Mark and Matthew-Luke any possible aid in reconstruction of forms and the laws controlling their history. This study will follow the same method. We will deal chiefly with Mark, with side-glances at Matthew-Luke for the comparison of narrative and discourse units.

The question of sources is always tied up with the attitude and opinion of the investigator. Do supposed rabbinic and Greek analogies to the gospel forms constitute valid source-material for our study? Dibelius devotes a chapter¹ to this material, and Bultmann mentions some additions,

1. Dibelius, TG, Chapter 6.

but one is struck by the paucity of valuable information gained from a study of these analogies. C. G. Montefiore¹ has written a volume in which he draws countless parallels between the rabbinic sources and the canonical gospels. His book is a happy hunting ground for those who wish to show that Jesus had comparatively little originality, or that everything Jesus said was also said by a not-too-distant contemporary among the rabbis. Such parallels have practically no influence upon our subject. It requires more than a simple parallel in order to establish relationship, to say nothing of derivation. There is a great temptation to think that a given idea could invade the ranks of humanity only once, and anything else that savors of the same idea is dependent. On this basis, it would be a simple matter to prove that parts of the New Testament derive their inspiration from ancient Chinese proverbs.

Hopwood has stressed the same point. "The use of parallels, further, carries with it certain handicaps. All the Rabbinic parallels to the Gospels are much later than the Gospels. They prove nothing in the way of dependence, for Rabbinism may well have been influenced by the growing faith of Christianity. Further, if the Rabbis taught very much what Jesus did, and Jesus be a typical Rabbi, how was it that the new faith which broke away from the national restrictions and became a gospel of world salvation centred

1. Montefiore, LT.

around Jesus, and not around Hillel or Shammai? Again, if Jesus were a product of embryonic Rabbinism, why did He leave out so much that Rabbinism considered essential? The Rabbis are tested not only by what Jesus may be supposed to have taught on parallel lines to their doctrine, but by what He omitted to teach¹.

Bultmann has gone so far as to contend that Jesus actually was a trained scribe and rabbi. If so, he was a rebel. He left the scribal ranks and appealed to the people of the land. His teachings, though often like the rabbinic materials, may be compared with the latter only with many implied conditions. The rabbinic materials are as much later than the gospels as the gospels are later than parts of the Old Testament.

However, it can be shown that the rabbinic materials were preserved by a process roughly comparable to *Formgeschichte*. This comparison is strictly formal, without regard to likeness or unlikeness of content. The rabbinic material seems to exist in small, self-contained units. It presents certain sayings-forms and dialogue forms which are similar to those of the New Testament. Also, the late date at which the rabbinic materials were compiled is a strong argument in favor of the accuracy with which oral tradition preserved important materials. If the sayings of the rabbis could be preserved practically verbatim in oral tradition for decades and even

1. Hopwood, REC, 351.

centuries, why would not the same be true of Jesus' teachings? Montefiore even points out that rabbinic statements were subject to the same changes during passing time as were the gospels. "As to the two forms in which the Beatitudes are preserved: the shorter form strikes one as the more original, but the growth of additions is typically Rabbinic. Over and over again do we find a paragraph of Midrash in which, after a Bible verse has been expounded and applied to certain circumstances, the next sentence records a slight variation, and the next yet another, and so on, each by a different teacher.... But these variants are nothing but recensions of the sayings of one teacher, repeated by his disciples, altered, slightly or greatly, in the lapse of time, and finally collected and put side by side by the author or editor of the Midrash".¹ Thus there are analogies between the two bodies of material.

At the same time, there are contrasts. "In one respect, indeed, the nature of much (by no means all) of the Rabbinic literature puts the Rabbis at some disadvantage when we compare their utterances with those of Jesus. For whereas Jesus is always speaking as a teacher and a prophet, Rabbinic literature often reproduces the Rabbis talking, as it were, among themselves, and without intending to be observed. In other words, by no means all of what we hear from them is taken from sermons or is deliberate teaching".² It is

1. Montefiore, LT, 3, quoting Herbert Loewe of Oxford.

2. Montefiore, LT, xxi.

perhaps this difference which gives the New Testament its remarkable significance. It can be pointed out that there are rabbinic parallels to every one of the Beatitudes, yet Montefiore says, "There is a certain glow and passion about the whole passage which are unique: there is a certain religious character and ethos about it which are marked and distinctive.... They (the Beatitudes) may fairly be considered as new in spite of the parallels".¹ Mere comparisons can never establish or destroy the historicity of the gospel materials except upon a basis of individual judgment. The contribution of the rabbinic materials is only in furnishing form-analogies, not in the matter of content.

Although Dibelius believes there is no literary form exactly comparable to what he calls the paradigm, he finds numerous rabbinic analogies to his other forms, especially in such phrases as the Tannaite introductory formula, "Our masters handed it down thus".² Even a hasty perusal of Dibelius,³ however, will show that his efforts to find analogies in the rabbinic materials have a distressingly negative result.

a. The rabbis were concerned chiefly with halakic stories -- that is, stories giving a rabbinic decision on some point of religious law, and then illustrating that decision. Such stores are notably lacking in the gospels, the only analogies being Jesus' remarks on fasting, rubbing

1. Montefiore, LT, 1.

2. Dibelius, TG, 133.

3. Especially Dibelius, TG, Chapter 6.

ears of corn, the tribute money, and the Sadducean question. Again, the Talmudic stories of this halakic type cannot be said to represent any one literary form. They exist in a dozen different forms, both narrative and discourse.

b. The rabbinic decisions represent Jewish tradition, and required generations to be compiled. The Jesus-material deals with one historical character and his personal statements, and was all collected within a few years.

c. In regard to the miracle stories: Those about the rabbis are either of the style Dibelius calls theodicy-legends (God intervening in order to stamp his approval upon a deed of law-abiding piety), or else are told in honor of the power of certain rabbis. They often include miraculous self-help, an element entirely lacking in the gospels. It must always be borne in mind that the gospel miracles of significance are miracles of healing -- quite a different variety from that predominating in the rabbinic sources. Thus, when the gospel material is put side by side with that of the rabbis, Formgeschichte has very little to gain from a comparison of the two. The most that can be said is that it is possible to find stories and sayings-forms of essentially the same literary type in both bodies of material. These vague analogies neither establish nor deny the historicity of the gospel forms. A frank comparison shows everything in favor of the gospel material.

1. Dibelius, TG, 143.

What has just been said may be applied with even greater force to the supposed analogies in the patristic apothegms, i.e., the *Apophthegmata Patrum*, or collections of sayings of the anchorites in the desert around Scete, dating from about 400 A.D.. The analogies are far-fetched, obscure, and exceedingly late. They offer no valid comparison with the gospel material. That an analogy is present no one can deny; that it is of any historic importance, no one can affirm.

The most obvious literary analogies are then remanded to the field of ordinary Greek literature. These Dibelius divides as follows: A. *Chriae*, or short, pointed sayings of general significance, originating in a definite person and definite situation. Samples may be drawn from Diogenes Laertius, Xenophon's *Memorabilia* of Socrates, and Lucian's *Demonax*. Dibelius summarizes the comparisons with gospel material thus: "There is a similarity of origin, a wide difference of content, which influences the diction, and a certain but essential difference of construction".¹ The *chriae* are most like paradigms, according to Dibelius' terminology, but the likeness is restricted chiefly to unliterary origin. It is almost impossible to draw any philosophical comparison between the paradigms or words of Jesus and the *chriae* of Lucian's *Demonax*. The former include the height and depth of the world's philosophy; the latter are merely puns or turns of clever speech, usually devoid of any

1. Dibelius, TG, 156.

real philosophical content. The gospel paradigm shows the action and saying of Jesus as definitely related, whereas the non-Biblical chriae are concerned chiefly, if not altogether, with the mere sayings of the hero. Apart from pure paradigms, however, Luke does begin to show literary likeness to the chriae in his tendency to omit the setting and concentrate on the saying itself. Dibelius finds several illustrations of how Luke begins to put a literary stamp upon materials he received in original pre-literary forms.¹ B. Dibelius draws further analogies from the Greek tales, especially those of healings of Asclepius in Epidauros.² It is possible to point out some comparisons in literary style between these and the gospel tales. The miracle element is prominent in both. He admits, however, that the gospel forms have a much greater stamp of truth and literary sincerity. The analogy illuminates comparable processes in tradition, but has no bearing on historicity.

Thus we are forced to the conclusion that the gospels themselves constitute almost the entire source for our investigation. We have considered Dibelius's analogies at some length because it is these analogies which first gave an impetus to the *formgeschichtlich* method, and suggested the criticism of form as a possible new approach to the gospels. But other than the historical origin of this new type of criticism, we have very little to gain from a study of the

1. Dibelius, TG, 162.

2. Dibelius, TG, 165 ff.

non-Biblical analogies. We find the comparison altogether in favor of the gospel accounts. The gospels have every appearance of historicity, whereas such works as Lucian's Demonax have every appearance against historicity. About all that can be gained from such analogies is the bare fact that literary forms comparable to those of the gospels can be found in contemporary literature, good or bad. Even this is scant aid, for the analogies are found at various and wide-spread dates, and often had an unliterary history covering many years. The gospels, on the other hand, originated in the life and work of a particular historic person, and had a comparatively brief unliterary history.

We might properly look to the letters of Paul for information about the historical Jesus, since they were earlier than the canonical form of the gospels. But it is a well known fact, or perhaps we should say a mystery, that Paul made little reference to the historical element in the life of Jesus. He often speaks of the death of Jesus, but gives no details about the event itself. He speaks of Jesus as crucified, but he is concerned with the interpretation of that event rather than how it actually happened. Now, it is preposterous to doubt Paul's extensive knowledge of the facts about Jesus' life. It is also preposterous to think that he did not, in the course of his preaching, use these facts very freely. Certainly a Greek audience would not be content merely to hear that salvation had come through the death of an unknown Palestinian. I cannot believe that

the mystery cults had destroyed Greek intellectuality to such an extent. Nevertheless, Paul does not recount these things in his letters. We must conclude that his letters deal with subjects in the discussion of which such historical data would have been of little use. An examination of the letters will show that this is a fact. The questions with which the letters deal are either those of personal behavior, of church relationships, or of theological beliefs. None of these would have greatly profited by an extensive reference to such material as we have in the gospels. Moreover, it can never be established that Paul's churches were so ignorant on these matters as has often been supposed. I see no reason why the fundamentals of the gospel tradition should not have been known in Asia, if they were well enough known in Rome that Mark could be written there. Why repeat what is already known?

Thus we conclude that the gospels themselves constitute almost our sole source. Much as we should like to have the help of Paul, he refuses it. Moreover, Paul's writings would not enter into a discussion of the literary form of the gospel material. They are couched in a literary form of their own, namely, the letter, an example of which is nowhere to be found in the gospels. The gospels must, and can, stand alone.

D. The probable future of Formgeschichte as an approach to the New Testament.

Is there a future for the formgeschichtlich type of investigation, or has the new method largely exhausted its resources? As a matter of fact, Formgeschichte has never been widely accepted. It has often been viewed as the personal fad of a few investigators. This was probably a result of the skeptical attitude of Dibelius and Bultmann. But the work of Easton, Fascher, and others, has demonstrated that here is a tool of many purposes -- that it does not need to confine itself merely to matters of form, and that form cannot be studied entirely apart from content. Fascher has called attention to the greatest need of the new method, namely, a simplification and coördination of the terminology. His comparatively simple analysis of forms, largely followed by Easton, is more satisfactory than the complex and subjective terminology of Dibelius and Bultmann. It is Fascher's and Easton's analysis which we shall follow in general, as we seek to make historical judgments.

In respect to the technical discussion of gospel forms, Formgeschichte has fairly well run its course. Future divergences along this line will represent personal opinion rather than literary criticism. The new system has established its technique. Next comes the process of simplification which must always be gone through in order to overcome the difficulties introduced by super-technicians.

It is this second stage which Fascher, Easton, and Taylor represent -- especially in their insistence upon limiting the recognizable forms to parable, sayings, miracle and other stories, and the great passion unit.

Future development in the realm of Formgeschichte will be largely in matters of interpretation and evaluation. It is in this realm that our present investigation claims its right. Our purpose is not to do again what has already been done, but to evaluate the previous work on a historical basis. The Christian scholar, after all, cannot be content with recognizing certain literary forms and analyzing them. This may be good literary science, but it is not good Bible criticism. We must further investigate the influence of this study upon former theories, its relation to theology and the development of the primitive church, and its value as a clue to the interests of the first Christian writers.

Most important of all, we must determine the influence of Formgeschichte upon our view of the historical Jesus. This is logically the next step in the method, for the following reasons: A. The great wave of recent skeptical writing, which views Jesus as a product of group imagination or cult legend, has opened the entire question of Jesus' historicity. If Formgeschichte offers itself as a new method of Biblical research, it cannot fail to answer this challenge. B. The literary importance of the gospel writings has recently

come to the fore with unusual prominence. Formgeschichte has itself been partially a result of this new emphasis upon the literary significance of the New Testament. It is in line with the increasing appreciation of the gospel literature, especially in comparison with contemporary standards. If Formgeschichte has something to say about this literature, it must also have something to say about the person who gave rise to the literature, and how that person is portrayed in it. C. Whether it is scholarship or mere piety, the fact remains that the New Testament narratives are of interest to people only as they portray the historic Savior. The gospels tell us about Jesus. Without him the synoptics would be just another collection of obscure religious fragments. Thus, for practical purposes, the influence of Formgeschichte upon our view of the historical Jesus is the crucial test of the entire method.

III. THE VALIDITY OF FORMGESCHICHTE AS A BASIS FOR HISTORICAL CONCLUSIONS ABOUT THE LIFE OF JESUS, AND PRELIMINARY EVIDENCE IN VERIFICATION OF THE GOSPEL ACCOUNT.

A. The forms themselves.

1. What they are, and how they are to be classified.

As long ago as 1905, Emil Wendling drew the attention of scholars to the fact that Mark consists largely of short anecdotes (notable chiefly for Jesus' discourse) and of miracle stories. The former he called "apothegms", the latter "wonder stories". He conceived that Mark had drawn these two literary forms from different sources, and had combined them unskillfully. Without evolving what could truly be called Formgeschichte, he emphasized the fact that the gospels are built upon only two or three distinct literary forms. Indeed, it is remarkable how few these forms are. In order to multiply them we would be forced to the needless dissection so characteristic of Bultmann's work -- dissection so complete that when the surgeon gets through he doubts that the pieces ever did constitute a single body, and despairs of reuniting them. Such dissection stands self-condemned because of its artificiality, and because of the extremely subjective element which it involves. We ought

III. THE QUALITY OF THE EVIDENCE AS A BASIS FOR HISTORICAL CONCLUSIONS ABOUT THE LIFE OF JESUS. THE QUALITY OF THE EVIDENCE AS A BASIS OF THE SOCIAL ASPECT.

1. The Social Dimension.

1. How many are, and how many are to be classified.

As long ago as 1905, Emil Hirsch, one of the leading scholars of the time, had already pointed out that the evidence for the social aspect of Jesus' life is very meagre. He distinguished between the "social Jesus" and the "religious Jesus". The former he called "apocryphal", the latter "authentic". He observed that the social Jesus was known from two sources: the Gospels and the rabbinic literature. The religious Jesus, on the other hand, was known from the Gospels and the rabbinic literature. He concluded that the social Jesus was a later development, while the religious Jesus was the original Jesus. This view was widely accepted at the time, but it has since been challenged by many scholars. Some have argued that the social Jesus was not a later development, but rather a part of the original Jesus. Others have argued that the social Jesus was a purely fictional creation. The debate continues to this day.

not to seek to classify the forms more closely than the material will easily allow. A given unit ought to fall, as if by its own weight, into the group with which it belongs. If there is any real doubt about its literary form, which is surprisingly rare, it ought to be listed as miscellaneous. Accordingly, we shall classify the synoptic material only in a general way. There would be no virtue in evolving another highly technical and controversial classification. The number of such classifications has already brought undeserved scorn upon the formgeschichtlich method. Neither is there any value in minutely comparing our own classifications with those of others. Such a comparison would only show that opinions agree on some matters and disagree on others.

However, we may safely say that the following points ought to be remembered as a basis for any classification of the material:

A. In the synoptic gospels there is a dominant interest in the words of Jesus. This is true not merely of the Q passages, but of every type of anecdote -- miracle, controversy, or simple narrative. The evangelists are concerned with what he did. We ought not to let the prominence of discourse in Q blind our eyes to the fact that non-Q material in Mark also has its full share of the words of Jesus.

B. If one will take trouble to view the gospels as a whole, he will be amazed at the number and extent of the parables.

Here, if anywhere, we have a literary form which all the sources show to be typical of Jesus' teaching. Most of the parables can be gathered more or less closely around the theme of the Kingdom of Heaven. They constitute a united and homogeneous group, a clearly defined literary form.

C. One will also note the number of wonder stories, mostly miracles of healing.

D. It is apparent that almost every story or pericope is so dominated by one aspect of literary form that its classification, on the simple lines herein indicated, is not a difficult matter. In cases where there are conflicting elements, it will sometimes be a matter of opinion as to which is truly dominant. For example, Mark and Luke have two elements in the parable of the sower: First, the parable itself, in strict parable form.¹ Second, the interpretation of the parable, which might be termed a didactic sayings-form.² Matthew goes farther, and introduces considerable material between these two elements, part of it being a quotation from Isaiah and part a saying of Jesus which has to do with parables in general.³ How should we classify such a complicated unit? Surely there is little to be gained by divorcing the two elements found in Mark and Luke. To contend that the explanation was a late addition of the

1. Mk. 4.1-9, Lk. 8.4-8.

2. Mk. 4.10-20, Lk. 8.9-15.

3. Mt. 13.14-17.

religious community is vain, and has no historical or documentary evidence in its favor. Since Mark and Luke are essentially in agreement on the matter, we may conclude that the parable and its explanation were united in tradition from the very earliest period. With Matthew the case is different, both other evangelists failing to include the quotation from Isaiah and the further sayings of Jesus. Yet this additional material has just as distinct a literary form as does the parable itself. Without doubt it fulfills the broad requirements of the didactic sayings-form. Therefore it ought to be classified as that form, regardless of the fact that Mark and Luke omit it. Why the material is there, and in what form it appears, are entirely different questions. Every unit must be classified in that group with which the dominant element in its literary structure appears to be most in harmony.

Thus approached, the entire synoptic material may be divided into the following seven groups:

a. Parables. It is in this group that Dodd finds "the stamp of a highly individual mind, in spite of the re-handling they have inevitably suffered in the course of transmission."¹ The parable, being a particularly simple and lucid type of short story, readily impinged itself upon the imagination and the memory. All unnecessary material is

1. Dodd, PK, 11.

eliminated. It is the original short-short-story. So far as form is concerned, it is in vain to make subdivisions of the parable classification. Such subdivisions might include "parables of the Kingdom", "parables of the Son of Man", "parables of crisis", or "parables of growth". But it must be remembered that all these subdivisions should have the same form. They would be only so much unnecessary machinery. Indeed, the parable form is so simple and unassuming that it almost defies description. About all that can be said is that it consists of uninterrupted direct discourse, that it is brief and to the point, and that it frequently involves simile or metaphor. The parables teach their own lessons, without the necessity for explanations.

Dodd rules out the general interpretation of parables, and insists upon "their intense particularity as comments upon an historical situation".¹ That is, the reason for the parable, or the stimulus to tell the parable, can usually be found in the setting where it is introduced. It grows out of life itself. Its Sitz im Leben is in the life of the historical Jesus. Its purpose is to clarify the situation which faces Jesus at the moment he tells the parable, though there is rarely a personal reference except in the formal "He said unto them....". Thus far Dodd is probably correct, but he is not content until he has declared that the gospel

1. Dodd, PK, 195.

... it is the original story... the...
 ... is in the... of...
 ... the... of...
 ... of the... "... of the..."
 ... of... "... of...". It is...
 ... that all these... should...
 They... to...
 ... the... is... and...
 ... about all... is...
 ... of... that it...
 ... and... is...
 The...
 ... without the...
 ... the... of...
 ... and... as...
 This is... for the...
 ... to... the...
 ... is... It...
 The... in...
 The... to...
 ... the... the...
 ... the...
 The...
 ... the...

settings of the parables have been ruined by the parenetic purposes to which the church adapted them, and by the eschatological notions with which they soon became contaminated. We have already pointed out that there is no reason to take this discouraging view. The parables find their Sitz im Leben directly in the life and experience of Jesus. Of all the gospel forms they are least contaminated by later influence. Moreover, the parable is easily recognized. There are cases when a brief saying of Jesus sometimes appears to be an embryo parable, but such items are better listed as sayings-forms. The true parable speaks for itself, and in most cases is actually called a parable by the evangelists.

b. Another obvious literary form in the synoptics is the monologue, or, as we shall call it, the sayings-form¹. The latter term is preferable because many of the sayings-forms are introduced by a question of the disciples, the Pharisees, or the multitude. Thus there is a touch of dialogue, but only enough to create a setting for the direct discourse of Jesus, which is obviously the chief point of interest. Formulas of introduction and conclusion are reduced to a minimum, the former often being a mere "Jesus said unto them...".

These forms have suffered most of all from the diversities of classification. Some of them have been called

1. The parable is, strictly speaking, a monologue too.

paradigms, apothegms, pronouncements, and a host of other names. They have been subdivided with hair-splitting accuracy -- yet they all represent fundamentally the same form. It is our purpose, following suggestions of Fascher and Easton, to simplify the terminology by calling all these units what they actually are, namely, sayings-forms. There is only one subdivision which naturally commends itself to us; that is, the distinction between didactic sayings and anecdotal sayings.

1. The didactic sayings are, as our term implies, those in which the words of Jesus occupy not only the center of attention, but the greater portion of the entire unit. There is a minimum of narration; the purpose is distinctly parenetic; the direct discourse almost monopolizes the scene. These forms are often grouped together so cleverly that there is a question where one unit ends and another begins. For example, if we did not know Luke's treatment of the same material, we might easily regard the Sermon on the Mount in Matthew as one long didactic sayings-form. It is really combination of several such form-units, better examples of which can be found nowhere in the gospels. In this group are included some of the paradigms of Dibelius and the apothegms of Bultmann, plus a large amount of other sayings-material. We cannot state too often that Formgeschichte must classify according to form alone -- not according to the critics' opinions of the missionary or ecclesiastical uses to

periods, especially, and a host of other
things. They have been subjected to all sorts of
analysis -- yet their all important functionally the same
form. It is our purpose, following suggestions of Professor
and others, to classify the literature by setting all these
things that they actually are, namely, systems of thought.
It is only one subdivision which naturally separates itself as well
that is, the distinction between dialectic systems and analytical
systems.

1. The dialectic systems are, as our data indicate, those
in which the words of reason occupy not only the center of
attention, but the greater portion of the entire unit. There
is a kind of a network; the purpose is dialectically presented;
the dialectic discourse almost monopolizes the scene. These
things are often treated together so cleverly that there is a
question about one unit and another begins. For
example, it is not now time's treatment of the same
material, we might easily regard the reason on the point in
question as the long dialectic system-form. It is really
negation of several such form-units, better examples of
which can be found nowhere in the dialectic. In this group
are included some of the pretensions of Hegelian and the
epitomes of Kantianism, plus a large amount of other things.
Material. We cannot state too often that these systems
are dialectically according to form alone -- the according to the
critical cognition of the dialectic or dialectical was in

which the material may have been put. It will appear at once that the didactic sayings constitute the largest number of all the gospel form-units. This is as we should expect, for the teaching of Jesus in all its depth and variety constituted the stimulus for the original preservation of the gospel records.

2. Anecdotal sayings are those in which the words of Jesus still constitute the chief interest, but a large portion of the unit is devoted to telling a story or setting a scene, to which Jesus' statement is the climax.¹ In other words, the reader must know the setting in order to understand the saying. He must read the story before he can grasp the full significance of Jesus' words.

Among the anecdotal sayings are some of what Dibelius calls "tales" -- also some of the paradigms and apothegms in which the words of Jesus are prefaced by description or narration. It is characteristic of this form that it recounts a single incident. It is a true anecdote, in every sense of the word. The situation is usually stated as briefly as good narration will allow. There is an obvious lack of portraiture, emphasis being directed toward the words of Jesus rather than toward the characters involved. The other party to the dialogue is described very indefinitely,

1. We could, with Fiebig, classify the material simply as sayings, parables, and anecdotes (RF, 26). But the system presented in this paper has the advantage of stressing the direct discourse found in so many of the anecdotes.

or perhaps not at all. There is little indication of place or time. The sole purpose is to give a concrete statement of some principle of Jesus. In his day a specific question was invariably solved by recourse to a general principle. So, while the specific question is sometimes not preserved for us, Jesus' answer preserved the general principle. This is good history, typical of first-century attitudes.

Certain form-critics have sought to divorce the setting from the saying itself. This is not form criticism; it is literary criticism of the cruder sort. It feeds upon the notion that a complex array of nuts and screws is more desirable than a machine which will actually run. An example will make clear that these form-units existed from the earliest period very much as they are today, and that the saying cannot possibly be divorced from the setting. The story of cleansing the temple will serve to illustrate the point, Mt. 21.12-13. The cryptic saying of Jesus, which is the climax of the form-unit, is found in verse thirteen, "My house shall be called a house of prayer: but ye make it a den of robbers". Now, why would it be recorded that Jesus quoted Isaiah 56.7 in such a connection unless he actually did? Moreover, it would be senseless for the evangelist to put these words into the mouth of Jesus unless he had set the scene in the previous sentences. That the saying would be preserved without the setting is manifestly impossible.

It would amount to nothing more than a verse from the Old Testament, and would be so regarded. Another good example is found in Mark 2.15-17. Here we see Jesus sitting at meat with publicans and sinners in the house of Levi. The scribes and Pharisees object.¹ Jesus answers, "They that are whole have no need of a physician, but they that are sick: I came not to call the righteous, but sinners." Here again it is obvious that the proverbial saying of Jesus could scarcely have vivid meaning apart from the setting which is preserved with it. It is against all the rules of oral tradition to presume that the words "I came not to call the righteous, but sinners" would have been treasured and remembered by themselves, as if in a vacuum. Only in connection with the supper scene do the words have definite significance; only then does the form achieve the completeness which is necessary in order for it to be retained by popular tradition. An overwhelming burden of proof devolves upon any critic who chooses to view the setting in Levi's house as the invention of a religious community some twenty or forty years after Jesus made the accompanying statement. At the moment we are not concerned with whether the Petrine tradition vouches for this story, nor with the purposes it may have served as missionary propaganda. We are concerned only with the fact that the entire form-unit necessarily

1. The identification is not necessarily accurate, nor is it the duty of Formgeschichte to say whether they were Pharisees or Zealots.

existed as an entity from the very earliest period.

In connection with the above examples it may also be noted that anecdotal sayings tend to group themselves. They look for their most natural position in the gamut of gospel material. The supper scene follows directly after the call of Levi, Mk. 2.13-14. This is proper, and it would be possible to view Mk. 2.13-17 as one form-unit, though in fact it is two brief anecdotal sayings. In the case of Mt. 21.12-13, verses 14-17 continue the temple scene and lead up to another Old Testament quotation of Jesus, "Out of the mouth of babes and sucklings thou hast perfected praise". Here again, verses 12-17 are linked together by the setting, and the two anecdotal sayings might well be regarded as one unit. There is no reason to believe that the two parts ever existed separately in tradition. They naturally belong together, and Formgeschichte cannot separate them. Ordinary literary criticism, on the other hand, would point out that the second quotation from the Old Testament is omitted in Mark and Luke, the unit terminating with the statement of opposition among chief priests and scribes. Between the contrasting versions the reader may take his choice. The forms are essentially complete in all three versions. As far as Formgeschichte is concerned they are merely different ways of writing down the same historical tradition.

existed as an entity from the very earliest times.
 In connection with the above question it may also be
 noted that the material evidence leads to the conclusion
 that the fact that the most recent position in the group of
 groups is correct. The age of some of the groups is
 the age of the last, i.e., 12-13. This is correct, and it
 is not possible to say that 12-13 is the true age.
 It is not that the two first mentioned groups, in the
 case of 12, 13-14, 15-16, 17-18, 19-20, 21-22, 23-24, 25-26, 27-28, 29-30, 31-32, 33-34, 35-36, 37-38, 39-40, 41-42, 43-44, 45-46, 47-48, 49-50, 51-52, 53-54, 55-56, 57-58, 59-60, 61-62, 63-64, 65-66, 67-68, 69-70, 71-72, 73-74, 75-76, 77-78, 79-80, 81-82, 83-84, 85-86, 87-88, 89-90, 91-92, 93-94, 95-96, 97-98, 99-100, 101-102, 103-104, 105-106, 107-108, 109-110, 111-112, 113-114, 115-116, 117-118, 119-120, 121-122, 123-124, 125-126, 127-128, 129-130, 131-132, 133-134, 135-136, 137-138, 139-140, 141-142, 143-144, 145-146, 147-148, 149-150, 151-152, 153-154, 155-156, 157-158, 159-160, 161-162, 163-164, 165-166, 167-168, 169-170, 171-172, 173-174, 175-176, 177-178, 179-180, 181-182, 183-184, 185-186, 187-188, 189-190, 191-192, 193-194, 195-196, 197-198, 199-200, 201-202, 203-204, 205-206, 207-208, 209-210, 211-212, 213-214, 215-216, 217-218, 219-220, 221-222, 223-224, 225-226, 227-228, 229-230, 231-232, 233-234, 235-236, 237-238, 239-240, 241-242, 243-244, 245-246, 247-248, 249-250, 251-252, 253-254, 255-256, 257-258, 259-260, 261-262, 263-264, 265-266, 267-268, 269-270, 271-272, 273-274, 275-276, 277-278, 279-280, 281-282, 283-284, 285-286, 287-288, 289-290, 291-292, 293-294, 295-296, 297-298, 299-300, 301-302, 303-304, 305-306, 307-308, 309-310, 311-312, 313-314, 315-316, 317-318, 319-320, 321-322, 323-324, 325-326, 327-328, 329-330, 331-332, 333-334, 335-336, 337-338, 339-340, 341-342, 343-344, 345-346, 347-348, 349-350, 351-352, 353-354, 355-356, 357-358, 359-360, 361-362, 363-364, 365-366, 367-368, 369-370, 371-372, 373-374, 375-376, 377-378, 379-380, 381-382, 383-384, 385-386, 387-388, 389-390, 391-392, 393-394, 395-396, 397-398, 399-400, 401-402, 403-404, 405-406, 407-408, 409-410, 411-412, 413-414, 415-416, 417-418, 419-420, 421-422, 423-424, 425-426, 427-428, 429-430, 431-432, 433-434, 435-436, 437-438, 439-440, 441-442, 443-444, 445-446, 447-448, 449-450, 451-452, 453-454, 455-456, 457-458, 459-460, 461-462, 463-464, 465-466, 467-468, 469-470, 471-472, 473-474, 475-476, 477-478, 479-480, 481-482, 483-484, 485-486, 487-488, 489-490, 491-492, 493-494, 495-496, 497-498, 499-500, 501-502, 503-504, 505-506, 507-508, 509-510, 511-512, 513-514, 515-516, 517-518, 519-520, 521-522, 523-524, 525-526, 527-528, 529-530, 531-532, 533-534, 535-536, 537-538, 539-540, 541-542, 543-544, 545-546, 547-548, 549-550, 551-552, 553-554, 555-556, 557-558, 559-560, 561-562, 563-564, 565-566, 567-568, 569-570, 571-572, 573-574, 575-576, 577-578, 579-580, 581-582, 583-584, 585-586, 587-588, 589-590, 591-592, 593-594, 595-596, 597-598, 599-600, 601-602, 603-604, 605-606, 607-608, 609-610, 611-612, 613-614, 615-616, 617-618, 619-620, 621-622, 623-624, 625-626, 627-628, 629-630, 631-632, 633-634, 635-636, 637-638, 639-640, 641-642, 643-644, 645-646, 647-648, 649-650, 651-652, 653-654, 655-656, 657-658, 659-660, 661-662, 663-664, 665-666, 667-668, 669-670, 671-672, 673-674, 675-676, 677-678, 679-680, 681-682, 683-684, 685-686, 687-688, 689-690, 691-692, 693-694, 695-696, 697-698, 699-700, 701-702, 703-704, 705-706, 707-708, 709-710, 711-712, 713-714, 715-716, 717-718, 719-720, 721-722, 723-724, 725-726, 727-728, 729-730, 731-732, 733-734, 735-736, 737-738, 739-740, 741-742, 743-744, 745-746, 747-748, 749-750, 751-752, 753-754, 755-756, 757-758, 759-760, 761-762, 763-764, 765-766, 767-768, 769-770, 771-772, 773-774, 775-776, 777-778, 779-780, 781-782, 783-784, 785-786, 787-788, 789-790, 791-792, 793-794, 795-796, 797-798, 799-800, 801-802, 803-804, 805-806, 807-808, 809-810, 811-812, 813-814, 815-816, 817-818, 819-820, 821-822, 823-824, 825-826, 827-828, 829-830, 831-832, 833-834, 835-836, 837-838, 839-840, 841-842, 843-844, 845-846, 847-848, 849-850, 851-852, 853-854, 855-856, 857-858, 859-860, 861-862, 863-864, 865-866, 867-868, 869-870, 871-872, 873-874, 875-876, 877-878, 879-880, 881-882, 883-884, 885-886, 887-888, 889-890, 891-892, 893-894, 895-896, 897-898, 899-900, 901-902, 903-904, 905-906, 907-908, 909-910, 911-912, 913-914, 915-916, 917-918, 919-920, 921-922, 923-924, 925-926, 927-928, 929-930, 931-932, 933-934, 935-936, 937-938, 939-940, 941-942, 943-944, 945-946, 947-948, 949-950, 951-952, 953-954, 955-956, 957-958, 959-960, 961-962, 963-964, 965-966, 967-968, 969-970, 971-972, 973-974, 975-976, 977-978, 979-980, 981-982, 983-984, 985-986, 987-988, 989-990, 991-992, 993-994, 995-996, 997-998, 999-1000, 1001-1002, 1003-1004, 1005-1006, 1007-1008, 1009-1010, 1011-1012, 1013-1014, 1015-1016, 1017-1018, 1019-1020, 1021-1022, 1023-1024, 1025-1026, 1027-1028, 1029-1030, 1031-1032, 1033-1034, 1035-1036, 1037-1038, 1039-1040, 1041-1042, 1043-1044, 1045-1046, 1047-1048, 1049-1050, 1051-1052, 1053-1054, 1055-1056, 1057-1058, 1059-1060, 1061-1062, 1063-1064, 1065-1066, 1067-1068, 1069-1070, 1071-1072, 1073-1074, 1075-1076, 1077-1078, 1079-1080, 1081-1082, 1083-1084, 1085-1086, 1087-1088, 1089-1090, 1091-1092, 1093-1094, 1095-1096, 1097-1098, 1099-1100, 1101-1102, 1103-1104, 1105-1106, 1107-1108, 1109-1110, 1111-1112, 1113-1114, 1115-1116, 1117-1118, 1119-1120, 1121-1122, 1123-1124, 1125-1126, 1127-1128, 1129-1130, 1131-1132, 1133-1134, 1135-1136, 1137-1138, 1139-1140, 1141-1142, 1143-1144, 1145-1146, 1147-1148, 1149-1150, 1151-1152, 1153-1154, 1155-1156, 1157-1158, 1159-1160, 1161-1162, 1163-1164, 1165-1166, 1167-1168, 1169-1170, 1171-1172, 1173-1174, 1175-1176, 1177-1178, 1179-1180, 1181-1182, 1183-1184, 1185-1186, 1187-1188, 1189-1190, 1191-1192, 1193-1194, 1195-1196, 1197-1198, 1199-1200, 1201-1202, 1203-1204, 1205-1206, 1207-1208, 1209-1210, 1211-1212, 1213-1214, 1215-1216, 1217-1218, 1219-1220, 1221-1222, 1223-1224, 1225-1226, 1227-1228, 1229-1230, 1231-1232, 1233-1234, 1235-1236, 1237-1238, 1239-1240, 1241-1242, 1243-1244, 1245-1246, 1247-1248, 1249-1250, 1251-1252, 1253-1254, 1255-1256, 1257-1258, 1259-1260, 1261-1262, 1263-1264, 1265-1266, 1267-1268, 1269-1270, 1271-1272, 1273-1274, 1275-1276, 1277-1278, 1279-1280, 1281-1282, 1283-1284, 1285-1286, 1287-1288, 1289-1290, 1291-1292, 1293-1294, 1295-1296, 1297-1298, 1299-1300, 1301-1302, 1303-1304, 1305-1306, 1307-1308, 1309-1310, 1311-1312, 1313-1314, 1315-1316, 1317-1318, 1319-1320, 1321-1322, 1323-1324, 1325-1326, 1327-1328, 1329-1330, 1331-1332, 1333-1334, 1335-1336, 1337-1338, 1339-1340, 1341-1342, 1343-1344, 1345-1346, 1347-1348, 1349-1350, 1351-1352, 1353-1354, 1355-1356, 1357-1358, 1359-1360, 1361-1362, 1363-1364, 1365-1366, 1367-1368, 1369-1370, 1371-1372, 1373-1374, 1375-1376, 1377-1378, 1379-1380, 1381-1382, 1383-1384, 1385-1386, 1387-1388, 1389-1390, 1391-1392, 1393-1394, 1395-1396, 1397-1398, 1399-1400, 1401-1402, 1403-1404, 1405-1406, 1407-1408, 1409-1410, 1411-1412, 1413-1414, 1415-1416, 1417-1418, 1419-1420, 1421-1422, 1423-1424, 1425-1426, 1427-1428, 1429-1430, 1431-1432, 1433-1434, 1435-1436, 1437-1438, 1439-1440, 1441-1442, 1443-1444, 1445-1446, 1447-1448, 1449-1450, 1451-1452, 1453-1454, 1455-1456, 1457-1458, 1459-1460, 1461-1462, 1463-1464, 1465-1466, 1467-1468, 1469-1470, 1471-1472, 1473-1474, 1475-1476, 1477-1478, 1479-1480, 1481-1482, 1483-1484, 1485-1486, 1487-1488, 1489-1490, 1491-1492, 1493-1494, 1495-1496, 1497-1498, 1499-1500, 1501-1502, 1503-1504, 1505-1506, 1507-1508, 1509-1510, 1511-1512, 1513-1514, 1515-1516, 1517-1518, 1519-1520, 1521-1522, 1523-1524, 1525-1526, 1527-1528, 1529-1530, 1531-1532, 1533-1534, 1535-1536, 1537-1538, 1539-1540, 1541-1542, 1543-1544, 1545-1546, 1547-1548, 1549-1550, 1551-1552, 1553-1554, 1555-1556, 1557-1558, 1559-1560, 1561-1562, 1563-1564, 1565-1566, 1567-1568, 1569-1570, 1571-1572, 1573-1574, 1575-1576, 1577-1578, 1579-1580, 1581-1582, 1583-1584, 1585-1586, 1587-1588, 1589-1590, 1591-1592, 1593-1594, 1595-1596, 1597-1598, 1599-1600, 1601-1602, 1603-1604, 1605-1606, 1607-1608, 1609-1610, 1611-1612, 1613-1614, 1615-1616, 1617-1618, 1619-1620, 1621-1622, 1623-1624, 1625-1626, 1627-1628, 1629-1630, 1631-1632, 1633-1634, 1635-1636, 1637-1638, 1639-1640, 1641-1642, 1643-1644, 1645-1646, 1647-1648, 1649-1650, 1651-1652, 1653-1654, 1655-1656, 1657-1658, 1659-1660, 1661-1662, 1663-1664, 1665-1666, 1667-1668, 1669-1670, 1671-1672, 1673-1674, 1675-1676, 1677-1678, 1679-1680, 1681-1682, 1683-1684, 1685-1686, 1687-1688, 1689-1690, 1691-1692, 1693-1694, 1695-1696, 1697-1698, 1699-1700, 1701-1702, 1703-1704, 1705-1706, 1707-1708, 1709-1710, 1711-1712, 1713-1714, 1715-1716, 1717-1718, 1719-1720, 1721-1722, 1723-1724, 1725-1726, 1727-1728, 1729-1730, 1731-1732, 1733-1734, 1735-1736, 1737-1738, 1739-1740, 1741-1742, 1743-1744, 1745-1746, 1747-1748, 1749-1750, 1751-1752, 1753-1754, 1755-1756, 1757-1758, 1759-1760, 1761-1762, 1763-1764, 1765-1766, 1767-1768, 1769-1770, 1771-1772, 1773-1774, 1775-1776, 1777-1778, 1779-1780, 1781-1782, 1783-1784, 1785-1786, 1787-1788, 1789-1790, 1791-1792, 1793-1794, 1795-1796, 1797-1798, 1799-1800, 1801-1802, 1803-1804, 1805-1806, 1807-1808, 1809-1810, 1811-1812, 1813-1814, 1815-1816, 1817-1818, 1819-1820, 1821-1822, 1823-1824, 1825-1826, 1827-1828, 1829-1830, 1831-1832, 1833-1834, 1835-1836, 1837-1838, 1839-1840, 1841-1842, 1843-1844, 1845-1846, 1847-1848, 1849-1850, 1851-1852, 1853-1854, 1855-1856, 1857-1858, 1859-1860, 1861-1862, 1863-1864, 1865-1866, 1867-1868, 1869-1870, 1871-1872, 1873-1874, 1875-1876, 1877-1878, 1879-1880, 1881-1882, 1883-1884, 1885-1886, 1887-1888, 1889-1890, 1891-1892, 1893-1894, 1895-1896, 1897-1898, 1899-1900, 1901-1902, 1903-1904, 1905-1906, 1907-1908, 1909-1910, 1911-1912, 1913-1914, 1915-1916, 1917-1918, 1919-1920, 1921-1922, 1923-1924, 1925-1926, 1927-1928, 1929-1930, 1931-1932, 1933-1934, 1935-1936, 1937-1938, 1939-1940, 1941-1942, 1943-1944, 1945-1946, 1947-1948, 1949-1950, 1951-1952, 1953-1954, 1955-1956, 1957-1958, 1959-1960, 1961-1962, 1963-1964, 1965-1966, 1967-1968, 1969-1970, 1971-1972, 1973-1974, 1975-1976, 1977-1978, 1979-1980, 1981-1982, 1983-1984, 1985-1986, 1987-1988, 1989-1990, 1991-1992, 1993-1994, 1995-1996, 1997-1998, 1999-2000, 2001-2002, 2003-2004, 2005-2006, 2007-2008, 2009-2010, 2011-2012, 2013-2014, 2015-2016, 2017-2018, 2019-2020, 2021-2022, 2023-2024, 2025-2026, 2027-2028, 2029-2030, 2031-2032, 2033-2034, 2035-2036, 2037-2038, 2039-2040, 2041-2042, 2043-2044, 2045-2046, 2047-2048, 2049-2050, 2051-2052, 2053-2054, 2055-2056, 2057-2058, 2059-2060, 2061-2062, 2063-2064, 2065-2066, 2067-2068, 2069-2070, 2071-2072, 2073-2074, 2075-2076, 2077-2078, 2079-2080, 2081-2082, 2083-2084, 2085-2086, 2087-2088, 2089-2090, 2091-2092, 2093-2094, 2095-2096, 2097-2098, 2099-2100, 2101-2102, 2103-2104, 2105-2106, 2107-2108, 2109-2110, 2111-2112, 2113-2114, 2115-2116, 2117-2118, 2119-2120, 2121-2122, 2123-2124, 2125-2126, 2127-2128, 2129-2130, 2131-2132, 2133-2134, 2135-2136, 2137-2138, 2139-2140, 2141-2142, 2143-2144, 2145-2146, 2147-2148, 2149-2150, 2151-2152, 2153-2154, 2155-2156, 2157-2158, 2159-2160, 2161-2162, 2163-2164, 2165-2166, 2167-2168, 2169-2170, 2171-2172, 2173-2174, 2175-2176, 2177-2178, 2179-2180, 2181-2182, 2183-2184, 2185-2186, 2187-2188, 2189-2190, 2191-2192, 2193-2194, 2195-2196, 2197-2198, 2199-2200, 2201-2202, 2203-2204, 2205-2206, 2207-2208, 2209-2210, 2211-2212, 2213-2214, 2215-2216, 2217-2218, 2219-2220, 2221-2222, 2223-2224, 2225-2226, 2227-2228, 2229-2230, 2231-2232, 2233-2234, 2235-2236, 2237-2238, 2239-2240, 2241-2242, 2243-2244, 2245-2246, 2247-2248, 2249-2250, 2251-2252, 2253-2254, 2255-2256, 2257-2258, 2259-2260, 2261-2262, 2263-2264, 2265-2266, 2267-2268, 2269-2270, 2271-2272, 2273-2274, 2275-2276, 2277-2278, 2279-2280, 2281-2282, 2283-2284, 2285-2286, 2287-2288, 2289-2290, 2291-2292, 2293-2294, 2295-2296, 2297-2298, 2299-2300, 2301-2302, 2303-2304, 2305-2306, 2307-2308, 2309-2310, 2311-2312, 2313-2314, 2315-2316, 2317-2318, 2319-2320, 2321-2322, 2323-2324, 2325-2326, 2327-2328, 2329-2330, 2331-2332, 2333-2334, 2335-2336, 2337-2338, 2339-2340, 2341-2342, 2343-2344, 2345-2346, 2347-2348, 2349-2350, 2351-2352, 2353-2354, 2355-2356, 2357-2358, 2359-2360, 2361-2362, 2363-2364, 2365-2366, 2367-2368, 2369-2370, 2371-2372, 2373-2374, 2375-2376, 2377-2378, 2379-2380, 2381-2382, 2383-2384, 2385-2386, 2387-2388, 2389-2390, 2391-2392, 2393-2394, 2395-2396, 2397-2398, 2399-2400, 2401-2402, 2403-2404, 2405-2406, 2407-2408, 2409-2410, 2411-2412, 2413-2414, 2415-2416, 2417-2418, 2419-2420, 2421-2422

The forms are complete and normal, regardless of which account has greater verbatim accuracy.

c. The third clearly differentiated literary form is dialogue. Many gospel passages include an interchange of conversation between Jesus and other characters, either individuals or groups. It does not matter whether these characters are clearly defined. As far as the form is concerned, what the evangelists have preserved for us is a dialogue. It is a definite interchange of conversation between two parties. This is a clearly differentiated literary form. It is distinguished from didactic sayings by the fact that other characters besides Jesus occupy a prominent place. It is distinguished from anecdotal sayings in that the topic of the dialogue is more important than the setting or background against which it is projected. We have noted that some sayings-forms include a second character, either a questioner or commentator. From these the dialogues are differentiated in that the other characters have a vital connection with the development and interchange of thought. They do not serve as mere pawns to raise the question -- they speak again in the course of the story, and make their influence felt. In length the dialogues vary greatly, some being scarcely more than a question and answer, and others being among the longest of the gospel forms.

In some cases the material could have been presented equally well in monologue or sayings-form. The fact that other characters are retained in the tradition may be viewed as evidence for the historicity of the dialogue form, since it is a well-known fact that popular tradition tends to drop out secondary characters and focus the attention upon the hero alone. In proportion as the secondary characters lose their vivid personalities, so the chief character becomes more vivid. Thus we are concerned with literary form more than the accuracy with which secondary characters are identified. It is the form which bespeaks the historicity of the dialogue units.

It would be quite permissible to list all dialogues as much, without further divisions within the classification. But the following subdivisions are suggested:

1. Pedagogic dialogues -- those in which the chief purpose of the conversation is instruction. They introduce us to Jesus as the teacher and the dialogue is between teacher and student.

It goes without saying that the dialogue was one of the dominant forms in classic and contemporary Greek literature. It was the method of the Greek schools and the Jewish rabbis. It is the form we would have most right to expect in the gospels. Just as the parables may be considered historical because they are unique and demonstrate

the stamp of a distinctive individual, so the pedagogic dialogues may be regarded as historical because they reproduce one of the common literary forms of the day. A splendid example of the pedagogic dialogue is found in Mk. 12.28-34. Here the secondary character is identified rather loosely as "one of the scribes" -- yet that identification is as likely to be correct as any other, for the question is exactly what a scribe would be sure to ask. He inquires about the most important commandment. Jesus answers that there are two commandments of equal importance, one concerning God and one concerning men. The scribe's response is one of agreement, and he even goes on to interpret Jesus' teaching in connection with the sacrificial system. Finally, we see the pupil commended by the teacher. This is a perfect, complete, trustworthy example of the pedagogic dialogue. It is noteworthy that Matthew gives part of the same material in the form of a didactic saying, Mt. 22.34-40. The Matthaean version demonstrates the later tendency to fade the secondary character out of his prominent place, making him only a tool to introduce the question. As far as Formgeschichte is concerned, both the Marcan and the Matthaean versions are acceptable examples of their respective forms. The fact that the same event is preserved for us in two different forms ought never to challenge its historicity. If anything, it helps establish

historicity by showing that the forms could be adjusted to fit the facts, and that the early tradition did not slavishly garble the facts to fit one form.

2. Controversial dialogues -- those in which, as the name implies, the interchange of conversation depicts a difference of opinion between Jesus and the secondary character. The opponents are frequently represented as powerful leaders of the existing religious hierarchy, or else members of the pious and popular Pharisaic group. They are almost never identified further than these vague terms, yet they accurately represent the groups from which they are said to come.

In every case of controversial dialogue, Jesus wins the controversy. Sometimes he puts the questioners to shame, or answers them with a still harder question. Sometimes his answer is so cleverly phrased that the opponents are between two fires. He beats them at their own game of quoting the scriptures, and wins on a basis of pure logic or common sense. Forms show no slavish uniformity in these matters -- a consideration which bespeaks historicity, and shows that the form serves as a vehicle for the subject matter, not vice versa. In general, the more varieties of presentation we can list under a given form classification, the greater is our confidence in the historicity of the material itself. In this respect the controversial dialogues are especially rich. As is the

case with all the dialogue forms, the center of attention is the conversation itself, not the character portrayal of the opponent. Indeed, the opponent's character must usually be surmised by what he says rather than by description.

A splendid example of this form is found in Mk. 11.27-33. We have just enough of the Jerusalem temple setting to make the appearance of the chief priests, scribes, and elders appear verisimilar. Their question is clear-cut. Jesus answers with another question, putting them between two fires. Seeing their dilemma, they profess ignorance and refuse to answer. Jesus closes the conversation by saying, in effect, "If you won't answer me, I won't answer you! Now we are quits!" In this case there is absolutely no pedagogic element involved. The sole purpose of the dialogue is to show how Jesus outwits his opponents and wins the arguments.

All the controversies show the supreme importance of Jesus' words and the disarming character of his arguments. In the first chapter we discussed Albertz's notable contributions along this line. It was there established, on the basis of his work, that the controversies are as definite a form as the parables themselves, and that their history in the oral period was such as to preserve historical truth. Indeed, we may view the arguments on this score as

conclusive. Later compilation did not destroy the primitive rabbinic aspect of the controversies. The personality of Jesus stands out with especial distinctness, marking the facts as historical. He is the sole focus of attention. He always has the last word, and with that word wins the argument. The very fact that there is an indifference to the thing for which a modern historian would first look, marks the form as historically trustworthy. There is no attempt at false display, or reading back of later apologetic motives. It is true that Jesus' words are preserved as rules of life. But the rules are based on historical fact, not upon polemic and interpretation. If the controversies were too carefully historical in outward appearance, the reaction would be against them. Jesus' hearers were not twentieth-century historians, and the absence of many things for which the twentieth-century historian would look validates rather than vitiates the historicity of the first-century material. This statement could be made about all the gospel forms, but for the moment we find that it applies with peculiar force to the controversial dialogues.

The subjects of the controversies are especially important in authenticating the material and pushing the present forms back into the earliest years of oral tradition. After 70 A.D. there could scarcely be much question about

such things as paying taxes to Caesar, or making the temple payments. Why would these subjects interest the church, or especially the Hellenistic branch of the church? They would never have been preserved, except that they were founded upon historical events and established in the core of tradition from the earliest years. We may agree with Albertz that the material is essentially historical, that it fell into traditional form and was orally collected at Jerusalem during the very earliest years, and that the bilingual character of Jerusalem easily accounts for its comparatively exact rendition into Greek.

d. The fourth classification to attract our attention is the miracle stories. Like the sayings, the miracles are recorded in groups or cycles, e.g., Mk. 4.35-5.43. It is noteworthy that of thirty and odd units to be listed in this classification, all but seven are miracles of healing.¹ These seven demonstrate a miraculous power over the forces of nature, namely, providing the tribute money, the great draught of fishes, stilling the tempest, walking on the sea, Jesus passing unseen through the crowd, feeding the multitude, and the blasting of the fig tree. Both groups show the same characteristics, as far as literary form is

1. Considering only the synoptic material, and counting the feedings of four thousand and five thousand to be the same story.

concerned. There is a definite miracle form in the gospels, capable of comparison with similar accounts in non-gospel sources. This form, reduced to its simplest components, consists of the following elements: A. The statement of dire need on the part of an individual, usually an invalid. B. An appeal to Jesus for aid. C. Jesus renders the desired aid, usually because of sincere faith on the part of the one aided. D. Expressions of surprise, wonder, thanksgiving, and admiration, often involving others besides the actual recipient of the miraculous blessing. Sometimes there is an exhortation to secrecy, but it is not general enough to be listed as an indispensable part of the form. E. Confirmation of the successful result of the miracles; e.g., the demoniac is seen clothed and in his right mind, the daughter of Jairus is given food, and the paralytic is able to carry his own bed.

It is remarkable how uniformly the miracle stories follow the standard form. In some cases the need is taken for granted, or is very briefly stated. In other cases the appeal for aid is eclipsed by the evangelist's picture of an interested gallery. On the whole we can say of the miracle forms what was said of the parables: So far as the forms are concerned, they are remarkably homogeneous. Not only are the standard form-elements almost always present, but

there is a uniform picture of Jesus as the healer of disease and the alleviator of trouble -- one who performs miracles not for purposes of showmanship but for purposes of mercy. As a result of modern distrust in miracles, efforts have been made to show that the gospel miracles are copies of a type common in contemporary pagan literature. On the whole, these efforts have been unsuccessful. There is a deep abyss between the straightforward human element, so characteristic of the gospel miracle, and the childish showmanship of even the closest pagan parallels. A comparison of the synoptics with the apocryphal gospels will show that even between canonical and the non-canonical Christian material this abyss was impassable. The synoptic miracle stories stand in a class by themselves, so far as content is concerned. The same is true of form. Compare with the gospel forms a miracle from the apocryphal Gospel of Thomas. We see Jesus as a boy of five years, profaning the Sabbath by playing in a stream, and making the water gather in pools by a word of miraculous command. Even the mud obeyed him. Out of the mud he made twelve sparrows. When playmates told Joseph what was going on, the latter began to scold Jesus, whereupon the boy clapped his hands, shouted "Go forth into the height and fly", and the sparrows became alive and fluttered away singing praises to God. Another child, a Pharisee, now took a stick and

destroyed the dams Jesus had built in the stream, to which the angry Jesus responded, "O thou of Sodom, ungodly and ignorant, what hurt did the fountain of water do thee, which I made? Lo, thou shalt become like a dry tree which hath neither roots nor leaf nor fruit." "And straightway he was dried up and fell to the earth and died".¹ Further examples of this sort of thing will be found in Chapter 1V, where the entire question of non-synoptic parallels is discussed. For the moment this typical example is illustrative of the insurmountable contrast between the gospel miracle forms and those of even the apocryphal Christian literature, to say nothing of the pagan. In the example we have given, not one of the characteristic elements of the synoptic miracle form can be found. It puts no emphasis upon faith, so typical of the gospel miracles. It is a profane story of a child endowed with wicked powers. It differs from the loving pity of the gospel miracles as does night from day.

So we must admit that the gospel miracle forms stand in a class by themselves. They are notable for certain clear-cut characteristics already cited. An incomplete miracle form in the synoptics is a rarity. They are homogeneous. They give a clear view of Jesus, and picture him as a man of mercy -- exactly the same picture we find in the passion

1. Gospel of Thomas, 1V, 1-3.

story, the sayings-forms, and all the other gospel forms. In short -- whether we like miracles or not -- the honest form-critic must admit that the gospel evidence speaks strongly for their uniform antiquity,¹ their completeness, and their compatibility with the whole mass of gospel material. So far as *Formgeschichte* is concerned, there is no reason to doubt the historicity of the miracles. If they were inventions of the religious community they would more nearly correspond to the Thomistic example given above. The latter is a perfect specimen of the sort of invention one would expect from community imagination run riot. The question of the miracles ought not to be a question of possibility or impossibility. The gospels testify that Jesus' disciples, and even his enemies, believed in his power to control nature and to heal. We must assume the intelligence of that belief before we can discuss the material itself.

We are willing to admit that the miraculous element was possibly heightened as the tradition grew older. This is apparent when the synoptic miracles are compared with the full-grown wonders of the fourth gospel. Easton thinks that the same thing happened prior to Mark, and that the control

1. Before imagination had begun to play upon the person of Jesus, as exemplified in the gospel of Thomas.

over miracle forms was not so close as over sayings-forms. This view is largely a result of modern shyness where miracles are condemed. If the tradition was careful about sayings, why should it not also be careful about miracles? If, as is evident, John departed freely from the core of tradition, but the synoptics held closely to it, why should not the same situation exist in regard to miracles? Indeed, Easton himself reminds us that the miracle element is often found hand in hand with a Jesus-saying. Why should one be preserved more intact than the other? We are willing to admit the possibility of heightened effect in telling the miracle stories, but there is no literary ground for doubting the historicity of the events. Formgeschichte does more to stabilize our belief in miracles than any other type of gospel study.

Another thing we must not forget is the inexactness with which facts are sometimes stated in the miracle stories. We know nothing about the severity of the fever which attacked Peter's mother-in-law. We do not know where the leper who came to Jesus was really tainted or merely under suspicion. It has been suggested that Jesus spoke "Peace, be still" to the disciples rather than to the wind, and we are inclined to take Jesus at his word in regard to Jairus' daughter being asleep rather than dead. To one who wished in ancient times to heighten the miraculous element, the way

was open. But it is significant that the stories sometimes retain such ambiguity. If the evangelist had wanted to make a great miracle, why didn't he change the tradition and clarify some of these facts? Actually, he left the stories as he received them, telling a great tale simply.

Another evidence of the modern flight from miracles is found in the treatment of the fig tree story. Even Easton rejects the story because there would be no figs on the trees in March. Now, if this were any other kind of a story, or if it were a sayings-form, critics would say it had been accidentally misplaced and really belonged in the previous autumn. But they feel themselves well rid of the theological implications of the story, so they let it stay where it is and reject the item in toto. This is very poor reasoning. We have repeatedly shown that a misplacement is more likely than an invention.

As an example of the typical miracle form, let us look at the story of the healing of a deaf man, Mk. 7.32-37. First of all the man's need is described: "And they bring unto him one that was deaf, and had an impediment in his speech". Element two: "And they beseech him to lay his hand upon him", that is, to heal him. Element three: "And he took him aside...." and performed the actual healing, as a result of which "his ears were opened, and the bond of his tongue was loosed, and he spake plain". Then follows the

was again. But it is significant that the reaction committee
 refused such testimony. It was overwhelming and seemed to mean
 a great deal. Why didn't he change the situation and
 directly name the other leaders? Admittedly, he left the situation
 as he received it. Making a great deal himself.
 Another witness of the events of the night was
 in fact in the presence of the big tree. Even
 as we reached the story, because there seems to be no sign of the
 great in itself. Now, it is not only a matter of
 story, or it is more a matter of fact, it is a matter of fact
 and has been radically changed and really belonged in the
 previous edition. But they had themselves well rid of the
 inconsistent explanations of the story, we say for it story
 alone it is not rejected the story is false. But in very good
 testimony. It says repeatedly that there is a significant
 in some identity with an intention.
 As an example of the typical miracle story, let us look
 at the story of the healing of a deaf man, Mk. 7:32-34.
 First of all the man's name is mentioned: "And they bring
 unto him one that was deaf, and had an impediment in his
 speech." (Mark 7:32) "And they besought him to lay his
 hand upon him." (Mark 7:33) "And he laid his hands on him, and
 he said unto him, 'Ephraim, hear thou.' And he said unto him,
 'Thou art made whole, open thine ears, and thy tongue be
 loosed, and thou shalt speak plainly.'" (Mark 7:34)

charge to secrecy, an element which is highly characteristic of the miracle forms, yet not so universal as to be an indispensable part of the form. Element four: We see the expressions of surprise and wonder; "the more he charged them, so much the more a great deal they published it. And they were beyond measure astonished, saying, He hath done all things well....".

It is obvious that this story, though not especially outstanding among the miracles, fulfills all the requirements of the standard miracle form. Examination of the other synoptic miracles would reveal a surprising uniformity in the literary elements represented. Next to the parables, the miracle form is most clearly defined and uniformly followed. Its historicity depends upon more considerations than does that of the parables, because miracles involve both narrative and discourse material. They are, in the final analysis, a type of story, and a story can be told in many different ways. Hence their historicity is not so much a matter of verbatim accuracy as of sincere presentation. Regardless of what may be our view of miracle, *Formgeschichte* brings only favorable testimony on the matter of historicity. The forms are primitive, clear-cut, and complete.

e. The next classification is the passion story, constituting a large self-contained unit. Most form-critics believe that the passion unit was the first to reach its

canonical form. It is characterized by a comparatively large amount of narration. All the previous forms, on the other hand, were dominated by the discourse of Jesus. Dibelius has said that the passion play is a single unit from the "Sanhedrin's plan for the death of Jesus to the empty grave", except, of course, for the interjected story of the anointing in Bethany. The latter is an independent unit, inserted here for the sake of convenience. Not only do the synoptics follow the passion pattern closely, but even John follows its general outline. Some items, such as the Last Supper, probably first existed as separate units. But they were early woven into the completed fabric. The pre-Marcian form may also have lacked the denial of Peter. Dibelius' view in these matters has already been treated in Chapter 11.

The prominence of the passion form in early Christian thought is evidenced, most of all, by its remarkable length. Although Mark 1-13 consists of a series of self-sufficient episodes, beginning with Chapter 14 we have a continuous, unified account. This passion unit comprises about one-fifth of the entire gospel -- a length which seems to the modern reader out of proportion to its importance. It would not have appeared thus to the early Christian. He was anxious to show that what appeared to be defeat was really a victory planned by God and foretold by the prophets. Indeed,

there are hints of the passion form as far back as the triumphal entry in Chapter 11, and Dodd suggests that the theme of the passion is first sounded in Mk. 8.37. That is, the theme dominates more than one-half of Mark, even though the form-unit involves only one-fifth. In Matthew and Luke this situation is less marked, but the theme is introduced before the last quarter of the material is reached.

In John the passion story definitely begins with the Last Supper, but the whole gospel looks forward to the cross. Thus it appears that Jesus' suffering early captured a large share of attention -- a situation which grew until it gave rise to the emphasis upon death and resurrection so typical of Paul and Acts. Indeed, Paul wrote to the Corinthians that the story of the passion was among the first things that he "delivered" to them.¹ This would lead us to think that for Paul the form was already quite fixed. "Whether it be I or they, so we preach..."² It was a universally accepted bit of gospel history. Its age and purity are further testified by the fact that, as Easton points out, it is the least Marcan part of the gospel of Mark. In this section the tradition has been retained with more than usual exactness. Mark's editorial notes are for the most part

1. 1 Cor. 15.3.

2. 1 Cor. 15.11.

easily identified, giving us a reasonable possibility of recovering the true primitive form of the story.

Although Matthew follows Mark only in general, and Luke introduces some of his own material, all three demonstrate that the early passion form involved the same common pattern. The items in this pattern were: A. The Last Supper and forecast of Judas' betrayal. B. Forecast of denial. C. Retirement to Gethsemane, followed by arrest. D. Jesus before high priest; Peter's denial. E. Jesus before Pilate; the rabble demand the release of Barabbas. F. The crucifixion. G. The burial. H. The resurrection. I. Appearance to disciples (anticipated in Mark, though now lacking because of the lost ending). There are variations in the presentation of the material, but all three synoptists include these nine points.¹ Again, all three endeavor to show that the passion and death were in fulfillment of prophecy, though the Old Testament quotations are somewhat at variance.

Thus it is demonstrated that the passion unit early developed to a point where its form was definitely fixed. This is a strong point in favor of its historicity. Moreover, the variations among the synoptists are not as great as often

1. Easton gives (CG) a more detailed list, including seventeen items.

could identify, giving us a somewhat complete
recovery of the original text of the story.

Although the text is not in general, and

the language used by the author, all these

elements that the story has involved the same

general picture. The story is not a story, it is

last chapter and foreword of the 'story'. It is not a

story. It is a story, followed by a story.

D. The story is not a story, it is a story.

Before this, the text is not a story, it is a story.

7. The conclusion. D. The story. It is not a story.

I. The story is not a story, it is a story, though not

making sense of the last chapter. There are variations

in the presentation of the material, but all these variations

are not the same. Again, all these variations

show that the story is not a story, it is a story.

8. The story is not a story, it is a story, though not

making sense.

Thus it is demonstrated that the story is not a story.

9. The story is not a story, it is a story, though not

making sense. This is a story, it is a story, though not

making sense. The story is not a story, it is a story.

I. The story is not a story, it is a story, though not

making sense.

pictured. We have shown that they all present the nine fundamental elements of the completed form. They all give the passion a lion's share of attention. Without doubt it was the first portion of the synoptic material to have its form fixed by tradition. It was early and complete. So far as Formgeschichte is concerned, all the evidence reflects favorably upon its historicity.

There is a diary-like aspect in the accounts from Palm Sunday to Easter, reflecting a continuity and accuracy which is sometimes lacking in the Galilean sections. This fits well with the fanciful suggestion that Mark was the young man in the garden. If so, he was recounting a tradition to which he could bear personal testimony.

f. There remains a certain amount of material which can best be classified as narrative anecdotes. Here we include such items as the genealogies and the birth stories. The shepherds and wise men obviously do not bear much weight in our discussion of the historical Jesus. Yet the stories are there, and they have the appearance of short, self-sufficient form-units. They are usually characterized by a lack of important direct discourse. The chief characteristic of the narrative anecdote is its ability to tell a story simply and well. Its character is not so distinct as that of the other forms we have studied. There are divers methods of telling a good tale. Thus the presence of the tale

itself, in view of the absence of characteristics which would class it in one of the previous groups, sets apart the items to be listed here.

g. If one wants to be absolutely accurate, he must add a final classification of connective and editorial material. This is not merely a catch-all for gospel rubbish. The connective sentences of the synoptics have a distinct form of their own, easily recognizable because of their brevity and somewhat stereotyped character. Frequently the item consists of only a single sentence, beginning with "Straightway", or "Now when", or some phrase having an obviously connective purpose. The amount of material remaining in this classification is surprisingly small. To be sure, certain critics are at pains to separate the setting of a miracle story from the miracle itself, and to brand the former as purely editorial. We have already noted that such a procedure is a crude attempt at historical criticism, and by no means *Formgeschichte*. In most such cases the setting is as much a part of the present form-unit as is the miracle itself. The same may be said of the dialogues, sayings units, and parables. In any event, the prime questions of historicity almost never hinge upon obviously connective or editorial items. These items are usually so general that they serve merely to remind us of Papias' statement that Mark

wrote "accurately but not in order". If there was to be any order at all, there needed to be stepping stones at certain spots. Our compilers would be little help indeed, if they could not supply such aids.

Occasionally there is an item which might be called a "mixed form". For example, some critics view the healing of the paralytic as a miracle form in its beginning and end, but in the middle a sayings-form on forgiving sins.¹ This is needlessly complex. A unit ought always to be classified according to its dominant element, but in this case the miracle is the dominant element. The earliest Christians were by no means microscopic in their views of literature. What would be more natural than to find a saying associated with a miracle? If one drove the point to an extreme, there would be hardly a pure form in the entire gospel material. But as we have already noted, one form usually dominates so completely that there is little doubt about the classification.

2. Some of their general characteristics.

Having concluded our discussion of the classifications, we may point out a few characteristics which are true of all

1. Mk, 2.3-12.

the forms, and which were the hints that first gave rise to formgeschichtlich investigation.

These are:

a. The forms are really forms. Their characteristics are so obvious that the units almost classify themselves. If they did not do this, the formgeschichtlich method would rest upon theory rather than facts. The existence of the forms is axiomatical for our discipline.

b. Most of the forms are brief, with the exception of the passion story (which may, indeed, be better viewed as a combination of several shorter units). Each form-unit usually has one, and only one, point of emphasis.

c. Related forms are freely grouped together, usually on a basis of continuity of subject, but sometimes on continuity of form; e.g. the dialogues of Mark 10, the sayings of Matthew 5, or the parables of Matthew 13.

d. We can frequently recognize the dominant motive which led the early community to treasure a particular item. These motives show the desire to immortalize Jesus and prove his Messiahship, rather than the desire to give a connected biography of his life. However, this fact does not stamp the material in any sense as unhistorical.

e. The forms show a definite relationship to the kerygma, or nucleus of early Christian preaching, as reconstructed from Acts and the Paulines. We must avoid

over-emphasizing this relationship. We will have the proper perspective if we always remember that the gospel material, though compiled in its present form at a later date, is actually in tradition older than the Paulines. Thus the Paulines, on questions related to the historical Jesus, ought to be corrected by the synoptics. To reverse this process is to put the cart before the horse. Dodd, of course, maintains that the Acts-Pauline kerygma is the only solid ground upon which to base synoptic investigation. He takes this attitude because he feels that the kerygma is well preserved in Acts, but the historical material of the synoptics has been garbled in the course of tradition. We wonder where Professor Dodd thinks Luke got his kerygma for Acts. Out of thin air? No, the kerygma, as well as the material associated with it in the earlier chapters of Acts, must have had quite a history in tradition before it came to Luke. Moreover, its forms are not so clearly drawn as those of the gospels,¹ nor was the material such that memory would easily preserve it as in the case of parables. In the speeches of Acts the reader is impressed by the unwarranted importance of the form (such as it is) rather than the content. Whether these speeches are historical or invented, they are definitely molded to fit a certain pattern. They are suspiciously alike, lacking the

1. Except, perhaps, in the speeches.

variety and vitality of the gospel sayings-forms. What has just been said ought not to destroy our confidence in Acts. It only indicates that the synoptics can stand in their own right, and from the standpoint of Formgeschichte they are more consistent than Acts. In the latter we have a very sketchy outline of the kerygma in the years briefly previous to the date it was written. This was comparatively late. In the synoptics, on the other hand, we have material dating right back to the earthly life of Jesus, before any artificial kerygma had been formulated.

f. Sometimes the form alone testifies to the historical value of a particular item -- even when the content might appear doubtful to the eyes of a reader in the twentieth century. The parables are outstanding examples. The form testifies to their originality, and to the striking individuality of the one who spoke them. They sound like Jesus' words. Such items deserve our particular attention. In other cases, where both form and content are favorable, the historicity may be regarded as established -- at least, as well established as we can hope to make it at this late time.

g. In some cases there is obvious use of well-known Hebrew proverbs, and perhaps Greek parallels. This can in no way condemn the material as unhistorical -- i.e., as not coming from the mouth of Jesus just as the gospels represent it. The appearance of a common proverb in the midst of

original material is just what we should expect from a teacher like Jesus. If Harry Emerson Fosdick should publish a sermon in which he had occasion to illustrate that "A stitch in time saves nine", would a distant reader condemn it as a hoax? Would he say it could not possibly have come from Fosdick, and must be the invention of a local Sunday School teacher, merely because the famous man condescended to speak in the words and thought-forms of his own time? Certainly not -- nor should the gospel material be treated in this ridiculous manner. Every man must speak in the terms of his own time. He has no others at his command. The gospels show us that this is exactly what Jesus did. In so doing they give the best possible evidence for the historicity of their own material.

h. Even though we have denied the overpowering influence of the religious community, we can rightly discover in the gospel forms some evidence as to the nature of that community. Naturally, the tradition preserved what the community found most interesting and most valuable. The unusual story about a coin in the mouth of a fish, for example, may have been preserved because the Jewish Christians found it an interesting commentary upon their own relationship to the temple. It is one thing to say that the community preserved this item because of its unique interest; it is quite another thing to say that the community invented the story to justify their temple relationships.

i. In most cases the *Sitz im Leben* of the gospel material can best be found in the life of Jesus himself. At least, we should first look for it there. Any other view would be pure perversity. Consider, for example, the Beelzebub controversy.¹ Why would the church invent such a story? What useful purpose would it serve in the religious community? It is much more reasonable to think of this interesting form-unit as preserving an actual scene in the life of Jesus. Take Jesus out of the picture, or put in his place a Christian of 65 A.D., and the entire unit loses its significance. Jesus is absolutely essential not only to the conclusion of the story (where he makes an important saying), but to the very existence of the story. Again, consider the unit in which Jesus upbraids his listeners for being able to read the signs of the sky but not the signs of the times.² Only by the greatest stretch of imagination could any *Sitz im Leben* be concocted for this item in the life of the church or community -- much less any cause for inventing the story. On the other hand, a *Sitz im Leben* can be reproduced in the life of Jesus with almost pictorial accuracy. He is teaching outdoors; the sky indicates questionable weather; the listeners are dull, some of them unfriendly; Jesus speaks the word in an

1. Mk. 3.19ff.

2. Mt. 16.1ff.

outburst of intense sincerity. Granted that this picture is imaginary, it reproduces the real Sitz im Leben of the form-unit more closely than any scene which could be drawn outside the historical life of Jesus.

To discuss all the synoptic form-units in this manner would be a very extended task, but the above examples are typical of what could be done. There is scarcely a unit which does not offer its most natural Sitz im Leben in the life of the historical Jesus.

j. In spite of all that Bultmann says to the contrary, necessary deletions from the gospel material on the grounds of intruding theological interests are surprisingly few. We note elsewhere that there is a wide gulf between the naïve simplicity of the gospels and the theology of Christian writings even as early as Paul. In short, Formgeschichte is the only answer to why the canonical gospels, achieving their present form after the death of Paul, still show a theological outlook incomparably more primitive than that of Paul. Bultmann is willing to admit that "all three synoptics show yet no influx of the church problems and controversies which were characteristic of the second century".¹ But we go back much farther than this. For Paul the great question was the relationship of gentiles to

1. Bultmann, EE, 3.

... of the ...
... of the ...
... of the ...

... of the ...
... of the ...
... of the ...

... of the ...
... of the ...
... of the ...

... of the ...
... of the ...
... of the ...

... of the ...
... of the ...
... of the ...

the law. Yet Mark has no material on this question, or a host of similar questions. Although Mark wrote immediately after the death of Paul, he used materials more properly dated 30 A.D.. He was interested not in theology, but in the facts about Jesus. The forms were preserved, whether orally or in writing, so accurately that the theological influence remained at a minimum. Occasionally there are glosses which may be due to the intrusion of such influence, but it is my opinion that the form-units are almost never controlled by it. Those which give most opportunity for doubt are items such as the birth stories, genealogies, the material on John the Baptizer, Peter and the keys, etc. -- all items which could be completely omitted without greatly detracting from our knowledge of the historical Jesus. When the evangelists dealt with history, they practiced conservative accuracy; when they dealt with items on the periphery of history, the pros and cons of which did not greatly matter, they naturally loosened the reins a little. Taken as a whole, it is surprising how little the gospels suffer on this score when Formgeschichte is applied constructively.

Menzies has expressed the situation thus: "The tradition grew up not in a western but in an oriental atmosphere; that is evident on the face of it; and it grew up largely, though of course not entirely, uncontrolled by

doctrine. The earliest Gospels are among the least doctrinal of the books of the New Testament".¹ When Matthew quotes the Old Testament and discusses fulfillment of prophecy, it is obvious that the evangelist is speaking, and not Jesus. In Mark the theological element is at a minimum, even the popular "Messianic secret" being largely a product of modern imagination. When the twin documents of Luke and Acts are compared, the theology of the former is almost indiscernible, but the latter sometimes reminds us of the Apostles' Creed. When compared to John, the synoptics show most clearly their simplicity and freedom from doctrinal influence. It is in vain to read certain parts of John without bearing in mind theological and philosophical concepts which are characteristic of his approach to Jesus. Such theological prerequisites are unnecessary in the case of Mark.

Let us express our contention in still another way: If theology plays as large a part in the synoptics as some critics seem to think, then just what are the theological notions at work? It is obvious that such items as the virgin birth, the atonement, resurrection of the body, and the trinity, scarcely entered the minds of the evangelists. If we agree that "From forms we can deduce the chief

1. Menzies, EG, 11.

theological interests of early Christianity",¹ then let us be reasonable and grant that the only theological interest actually manifested by the gospel forms is an intense interest in the historical Jesus. Without the historical Jesus these forms could not even exist. Since he is present in practically every form-unit, it is obvious that his historical life was by all odds the chief interest of the community at a time when eyewitnesses could still verify the material. Those who look for theological interests in the gospels are beaten at their own game. The almost unbelievable dominance of the Jesus-interest bolsters the validity of the gospel account of his life. In comparison, all other interests sink so far into the background that a very active imagination is needed to reconstruct them.

There are some critics, such as Riddle, who say that the reflection of the first-century community is not so much theological as ethical. He contends that the Mosaic law would not seem foreign to Romans who could accept the cults of Mithra and Cybele. Thus the Mosaic element built itself into Christianity even on gentile soil, and by the time actual opposition arose between Christians and Jews, the former had already appropriated the Old Testament and made it their own. Thereupon they justified their social practices by putting them into the mouth of Jesus, using the Mosaic law as

1. Dibelius, TG, 295.

a sort of touchstone. Such an argument goes in circles. Where would the Christian community get such a distinctive ethic if not from Jesus himself? Why should it differ so markedly from the Mosaic law? In other words, why does the New Testament ethic differ from the Old Testament ethic? The mere fact that Christians would meditate upon such questions as fasting and prayer does not explain the striking contrast on this score. Nor can we be persuaded that this contrast was due to gentile influence -- especially when the gospels present the Christian ethic in such distinctly Jewish forms. Here again we are forced to conclude that the typical Christian ethic came from Jesus himself. It appears in Jewish forms because Jesus presented it in that way, comparing it with the Mosaic law to which his first followers were accustomed. The ethical element is no more a late community inroad on the gospel tradition than is the theological element. The latter is of very feeble extent; the former goes back to Jesus himself, and is uniquely authentic.

What has just been said of theological accretions from Christian sources can also be said of those from Jewish sources. In spite of all the Jewish influence which we see in the forms themselves, the gospels are more than a mere working over of the ethics of Judaism. Even if we grant that some parallels to the gospel forms may be found in rabbinic

sources, this does not mean that the Christians copied the rabbis. If anything, the historical order of the material would suggest just the opposite. Neither ought the historicity of the gospel accounts be doubted because the forms often include proverbs and popular sayings which must have been universal property in the time of Jesus. Why should he not avail himself of these items? What would be more natural? In brief, our contention is that the search for possible intrusion from Christian theology and Jewish ethics has been greatly overdone. The wish has been father to the thought in this effort to discredit the gospel material. Formgeschichte answers that, though there may be parallels in form as well as content, the synoptic forms still stand in their own right. Careful study indicates their primitiveness and completeness, and bespeaks their historical worth.

k. The forms are preserved entire. There is a unity about them. We do not have the beginning of a miracle story, then something about the passion, and the conclusion of a parable. If the gospels were such a hodgepodge of mutilated fragments, Formgeschichte could make little contribution on the historical score. As a matter of fact, each form-unit is preserved entire. When we have a miracle story, that story almost invariably includes all the items

characteristic of the form, e.g., statement of need, necessity for faith, healing, verification, etc.. We are not told what eventually happened to the rich young ruler, yet the incident of his contact with Jesus is narrated in its brief entirety. This characteristic of the forms is almost self-evident. It leads to the conclusion that Mark, in making his compilation, exercised the same care with historical details as had been exercised when the form-units first began to take shape in 30 A.D. to 40 A.D.. The tradition was preserved in units, but those units were kept intact. Their order may be wrong, or based upon a very general outline of Jesus' life, but their integrity is assured. They were the objects of careful thought and pious memory -- not the victims of amateurs in literary surgery.

1. We have elsewhere discussed the adaptability of the gospel forms to extended retention by memory, without the aid of written records. We call attention to this characteristic here, because it is a universal trait of the various forms. The point cannot be kept too clearly before our minds. Those who doubt the ability of the Oriental memory need only to recall some pastor of their own youth, who, well versed in Biblical lore, could throw his sermon notes aside and quote the gospels for an hour at a stretch. Perhaps this is a modern reproduction of early Christian preaching. No one can scoff at such an accomplishment. Moreover, our preacher is likely to do just what the

evangelists did, namely, quote verbatim the material that interests him and is pertinent to his subject, but interject brief connective sentences and interpretative comments of his own. His "Rahmen" may be no more exact than Mark's, but his method is surprisingly the same. His comments may show some theological interest like Matthew's, but they will also be like Matthew's in that they can be readily distinguished from the traditional material. This type of sermon is now out of style, but one does not have to reach back far in his memory to find men who were masters in the art. The analogy to early Christian preaching is very close, and the testimony to the historicity of verbal tradition is valid.

3. Responsibility to consider them in the light of the first century, and not of modern times.

In recent years certain scholars have sternly reminded us that we should read the gospels in the light of the first century. We must rid our minds of modern theological and historical notions. Most common of these is the idea that nothing accurate could come out of the first century. Elsewhere in this thesis the question is fully discussed, but we may remind ourselves that the first century had more historical interest than most critics will allow. If the

early Christians had not really wanted to know the facts about Jesus, we should never have had the gospels at all. The evangelists could be just as historically-minded as they wanted to be. Luke, indeed, makes this specific claim for himself, and there is no reason to think that he was insincere. His views of history differed from those of Matthew and Mark, but this proves only that all three evangelists were human. That his views differed from our own shows only that several centuries have elapsed in the meantime.

An example of what we mean by adopting the first-century viewpoint is found in the story of the healing of the paralytic. How shall we view this story? To modern theologians it represents the problem of evil -- whether suffering is a result of sin. To another, it might involve the problem of Jesus' authority to forgive sins (as the story itself partially suggests). In all probability the Christians of the first century viewed it as they would any other miracle story; they thought chiefly of the miracle itself, and Jesus' wonderful power to perform it. Men of the first century believed in miracles, and to them this story was an earnest attempt to tell the truth. Our prejudice in the matter of miracle should count for as little as possible in discussing such cases. "Even if we incline to disbelieve in miraculous interference with the course of nature, that

does not mean that we have any right to treat stories which contain a miraculous element as if they were mere free inventions. The real question that must be asked is, in the first place, one of origin rather than of faithfulness".¹

It is easy to reconstruct the so-called kerygma so that it represents little more than the Apostles' Creed, in which the thought jumps directly from "born of the virgin Mary" to "suffered under Pontius Pilate". The Nicene Creed moves from "incarnatus" directly through "homo factus est" to "crucifixus". When we note the scarcity of references to the historical Jesus in Paul, it is easy to put these two elements together and conclude that there never was any real interest in the historical Jesus. Then the question arises again, Why do we have the gospels at all? There is only one answer: The earliest church needed and wanted the gospels. Having put aside all theological speculation, and having made allowance for what Paul certainly knew but did not write, the gospels continue to hold the clue which unlocks the Christian thought of the first century. If we would read them in the light of the first century, we would find the Sitz im Leben for the gospel material not in Paul's letters, much less in the later creeds, but in the life of Jesus himself. Our purpose is not to establish every word of the gospels as

1. Burkitt, SLJ, 12.

scientifically accurate. Rather, the gospel view of Jesus is historically true if we can derive from it the essential facts about Jesus, as they were believed and trusted in the earliest days. Most of our historical doubts disappear with a backward change in our point of view.

We have mentioned the importance of a first-century view of miracles, in order to understand the miracle stories. A similar view is necessary to understand many of the sayings. We must remember that it was customary to settle specific matters by recourse to general principles. So when Jesus states a general principle, perhaps in answer to a specific question, he is using a form which was characteristic of his day. We ought to recognize this as good history.

4. The laws that govern them; how tradition preserved them.

From the standpoint of pure Formgeschichte we ought not to maintain greater historicity for one form than for another, unless it is very evident that the two forms differ in purity. For example, a miracle story is just exactly as typical of first-century Palestine as is a sayings-form. This cannot be denied. The forms are not always perfect. Indeed, they are rarely so. This fact demonstrates, rather than destroys, their trustworthiness. Has any one seen an

absolutely perfect letter form, or essay form, or anecdote form? If such perfection does not exist in modern life, it would not exist in the first century. Yet the modern reader can distinguish between good and bad letters on the basis of certain general characteristics. The same is true of first-century forms. They were a means to an end, rather than an end in themselves. The gospel compilers used certain forms because they offered a desirable means to say what needed to be said. Perhaps they used these forms more or less unconsciously. They were native to Jesus' practice, and to the practice of the primitive church. The presence of artificial forms, obviously followed with minute care because of a desire to keep certain rules, would cast suspicion upon the content. But such artificiality is not found in the gospels. The uniqueness of the forms is verified by their imperfections. All evidence points to the fact that they were used as a means to an end, rather than as end in themselves. We are justified in maintaining the historicity of all form-units which display the characteristics of their form so clearly that early origin and purity of transmission are well established. This is what Albertz does so admirably when he contends that, though the dialogues of dispute give evidence of following a fixed form, that very form is a tribute to their historicity. The controversies are authentic. They are fitted to the literary form only by

omitting needless details, with consequent heightening of the effect of controversial dialogue. Thus we may derive our first rule for the transmission of the material.

a. The form-unit is transmitted in an essentially pure state, and historicity depends upon the purity of the form rather than upon the presence or lack of details regarding time, place, or characters.

b. Direct discourse is usually transmitted more accurately than indirect discourse, especially in the oral stages. The historicity of the material is testified by the overwhelming predominance of direct discourse in the gospels. There is no need to argue the point that, in sayings-forms for example, the saying itself is the most trustworthy part of the form-unit. This is universally recognized, as is also the fact that the didactic sayings are superior to the anecdotal sayings in their historical probability. The emphasis upon oral teaching and the preservation of a rabbi's exact words is developed elsewhere in this paper.

As a rule, the tendency of oral tradition is to replace direct discourse with indirect. The almost total absence of indirect discourse in the gospels is indicative of the proximity between the events themselves and the form-units which have preserved them for us. This point can scarcely be stressed too much.

c. The presence of poetic elements of parallelism, meter, and perhaps rime, tends to simplify the preservation of a particular form-unit, and also bears witness to its historicity. A study of Burney's work will show the dominant place occupied by poetic forms in the New Testament. This is doubly significant: It shows that such forms were easiest preserved, and it assures the literal accuracy of what was preserved. There is a minimum of editorial tampering in these portions. This does not mean that tampering would show itself by spoiling the poetic forms -- such a contention would only assume that the compilers were bad poets, which is not necessarily true. Rather, the uniformity of the poetic element throughout the gospel material indicates that it derives that form from Jesus himself, augmented and sometimes altered by the course of oral tradition. We speak of the old English ballads as "folk products" or "community products". This does not mean that a group once sat around the camp fire and, as if all tongues were guided by miracle, began to chant a given set of words together. Every verse had an original author. The folk influence may make itself felt, but it is more in the realm of preservation than of creation. This is a very important point to remember as we consider the historicity of the gospel material.

d. The forms tend to become shorter, more rounded, and less detailed as time goes on. This is due in part to the

normal failure of memory, and in part to a tendency to heighten the points of emphasis by omitting secondary or unimportant material. Vincent Taylor recounts¹ some modern experiments along this line, wherein he examined the changes taking place in the second and third stages of a story orally transmitted from person to person. It was demonstrated beyond doubt that the entire unit undergoes a process of shortening, and that details tend to be replaced by generalities. Such additions or explanations as are made in the later stages are of a general character, and are usually harmless as far as historicity is concerned. This tendency toward brevity and generalization will be discussed in great detail later in this thesis, as a demonstration that the gospels actually underwent contraction rather than expansion. That is, true details were dropped rather than false details added.

e. Among the details that tend to disappear most readily are personal and place names. However, this disappearance does not affect the historicity of the material beyond the mere fact of incompleteness. A story with three details may be just as historical as the same story with ten details. There is a certain type of criticism which reasons as follows: If a form-unit lacks details, it is obviously unhistorical; if it has them, they must have been invented,

1. Taylor, FGT, appendix 2.

and it is obviously unhistorical. True criticism, on the other hand, reasons as follows: The lack of details is no hindrance to historicity, but the presence of details indicates the primitive nature of the story and its greater proximity to the time of the event narrated. Thus the presence of details is helpful, but the absence of details is not evidence against historicity.

f. In spite of all changes, folk tradition has an innate tendency to retain the substance of a story unaltered. This tendency is elsewhere referred to as the self-censorship of the community. This self-censorship is a very real thing, especially when the materials are precious to the hearts of the people. It constitutes one of the strongest evidences for the historicity of our gospel material.

B. Some statements about possible earlier documents or collections.

Since Formgeschichte must face the question of sources for the synoptics, it is necessary to say something about possible earlier documents. Theoretically, the chief of these was Q. We have already stated the principle that Formgeschichte allows either written or oral sources, while insisting on the original existence of the tradition in small oral units. The critics have had turns at listing reasons

why the material was not written down from the very first, and why it was written down later. F. C. Grant has concocted perhaps the longest list, arguing that delay was due to the unliterary interests of the early Christians, to the cost of writing materials, to the expected Parousia, and to the practical difficulties of gathering data from the scattered disciples. Surely Grant has forgotten the early centralization of the primitive community in Jerusalem. He has also forgotten that Paul wrote quite freely without worrying about the cost, and that the gospels were widely distributed after they finally reached written form. On the other side he lists the usual needs, for missionary teaching, instruction, controversy against Jewish attacks, liturgical purposes, and a number of others. Probably all these reasons have some truth in them, but the essential one is this: There was both a need and a desire to know about Jesus, and to preserve an accurate tradition; such a tradition was at hand, and nothing would be more natural than for those with literary ability to reduce it to writing.

The argument from "needs" is not very conclusive in regard to written documents. For example, the necessity of proving Jesus the Messiah, or of teaching converts the important facts about Jesus, could be met almost as well by oral tradition as by written tradition. The "needs", rather, are indicative of the fact that some kind of definite

tradition was necessary from the very beginning of the Christian enterprise. Easton says, "The teaching, therefore, must have been reduced to its barest essentials, classified in brief sections easy to memorize and apply; the most notable result of the recent critical study is the proof that the teaching was actually thus given".¹

It would be interesting to compare the problems of converts with the gospel forms, and discover the relationship between them. For example, if a convert needed courage or faith, a passion form or miracle form would be the answer; if he fearfully sought forgiveness, a saying on forgiveness from the mouth of Jesus would be the normal form; if he doubted the Messiahship of Jesus, he would need a dialogue in which an eyewitness testified to that phase of Jesus' character. Thus the forms were not artificially made up, but were specific answers to certain problems of the Christian community. When would this happen? When would these relationships between form and need be established? They would be established immediately after the resurrection, in the period described by early Acts. That is, they would grow up in the oral period, when the facts about Jesus were fresh in the minds of eyewitnesses and the forms could receive the stamp of historicity. To list the "needs" is not so

1. Easton, GG, 32.

important as to recognize how the gospel forms show that a historically trustworthy answer was found for them.

Just when these units left the oral stage is a difficult question. In approaching it, our first task is to distinguish the editorial element in our present gospels. "When we distinguish between Mark and the material used by Mark, we move back a notable stage into the earlier 'common' Christian tradition".¹ This is what Schmidt did with considerable success, and what Bultmann did with more detail but less success. It is an interesting and important task, but so fraught with subjective difficulties that we shall avoid it as much as possible, staying close to Formgeschichte and occasionally allowing a possible editorial sentence to slip by with the mass of historical material. Just how one can identify these possible stray sentences is beyond our knowledge. Fortunately, we are not forced to do it in order to demonstrate the contribution Formgeschichte makes to the historical problem.

How early did written sources take the place of oral tradition? We have elsewhere hinted that the change was fairly early -- doubtless earlier than most scholars would be willing to allow. The argument for written gospel-forms at an early date is based upon the following contentions:

1. Although the oriental memory was tenacious, that

1. Easton, EG, 6.

The first of these is the fact that the
 second of these is the fact that the
 third of these is the fact that the
 fourth of these is the fact that the
 fifth of these is the fact that the
 sixth of these is the fact that the
 seventh of these is the fact that the
 eighth of these is the fact that the
 ninth of these is the fact that the
 tenth of these is the fact that the
 eleventh of these is the fact that the
 twelfth of these is the fact that the
 thirteenth of these is the fact that the
 fourteenth of these is the fact that the
 fifteenth of these is the fact that the
 sixteenth of these is the fact that the
 seventeenth of these is the fact that the
 eighteenth of these is the fact that the
 nineteenth of these is the fact that the
 twentieth of these is the fact that the
 twenty-first of these is the fact that the
 twenty-second of these is the fact that the
 twenty-third of these is the fact that the
 twenty-fourth of these is the fact that the
 twenty-fifth of these is the fact that the
 twenty-sixth of these is the fact that the
 twenty-seventh of these is the fact that the
 twenty-eighth of these is the fact that the
 twenty-ninth of these is the fact that the
 thirtieth of these is the fact that the
 thirty-first of these is the fact that the
 thirty-second of these is the fact that the
 thirty-third of these is the fact that the
 thirty-fourth of these is the fact that the
 thirty-fifth of these is the fact that the
 thirty-sixth of these is the fact that the
 thirty-seventh of these is the fact that the
 thirty-eighth of these is the fact that the
 thirty-ninth of these is the fact that the
 fortieth of these is the fact that the
 forty-first of these is the fact that the
 forty-second of these is the fact that the
 forty-third of these is the fact that the
 forty-fourth of these is the fact that the
 forty-fifth of these is the fact that the
 forty-sixth of these is the fact that the
 forty-seventh of these is the fact that the
 forty-eighth of these is the fact that the
 forty-ninth of these is the fact that the
 fiftieth of these is the fact that the
 fifty-first of these is the fact that the
 fifty-second of these is the fact that the
 fifty-third of these is the fact that the
 fifty-fourth of these is the fact that the
 fifty-fifth of these is the fact that the
 fifty-sixth of these is the fact that the
 fifty-seventh of these is the fact that the
 fifty-eighth of these is the fact that the
 fifty-ninth of these is the fact that the
 sixtieth of these is the fact that the
 sixty-first of these is the fact that the
 sixty-second of these is the fact that the
 sixty-third of these is the fact that the
 sixty-fourth of these is the fact that the
 sixty-fifth of these is the fact that the
 sixty-sixth of these is the fact that the
 sixty-seventh of these is the fact that the
 sixty-eighth of these is the fact that the
 sixty-ninth of these is the fact that the
 seventieth of these is the fact that the
 seventy-first of these is the fact that the
 seventy-second of these is the fact that the
 seventy-third of these is the fact that the
 seventy-fourth of these is the fact that the
 seventy-fifth of these is the fact that the
 seventy-sixth of these is the fact that the
 seventy-seventh of these is the fact that the
 seventy-eighth of these is the fact that the
 seventy-ninth of these is the fact that the
 eightieth of these is the fact that the
 eighty-first of these is the fact that the
 eighty-second of these is the fact that the
 eighty-third of these is the fact that the
 eighty-fourth of these is the fact that the
 eighty-fifth of these is the fact that the
 eighty-sixth of these is the fact that the
 eighty-seventh of these is the fact that the
 eighty-eighth of these is the fact that the
 eighty-ninth of these is the fact that the
 ninetieth of these is the fact that the
 ninety-first of these is the fact that the
 ninety-second of these is the fact that the
 ninety-third of these is the fact that the
 ninety-fourth of these is the fact that the
 ninety-fifth of these is the fact that the
 ninety-sixth of these is the fact that the
 ninety-seventh of these is the fact that the
 ninety-eighth of these is the fact that the
 ninety-ninth of these is the fact that the
 hundredth of these is the fact that the

tenacity cannot be a catchall for gospel criticism. The materials are so accurate and so full of detail that we would normally expect written records to supplement memory at a reasonably early period. To write the thing down is the natural aid for a tiring memory. Moreover, missionary activity would demand written materials. It became necessary to teach many people the way of Jesus and the rules of the way at once. Among Greeks this would not likely be done as among Jews, by recourse to a compendium of memorized material. It would be through recourse to documents, in the typical Greek manner. The Greeks inherited none of the Jewish dislike for written records.¹ Indeed, they inherited a desire for documents and books. When this fact is taken into consideration, along with the further fact that the gospel forms are actually Jewish, it would lead to a strong assumption that the time of writing corresponded rather closely with the beginning of the gentile mission. The gospels are Jewish, but they were ~~early~~ thrown into a gentile environment. Hence, in order to have preserved unchanged the Jewishness of the material, it must have been largely written down as soon as it began to circulate among Greeks. That it was written down carefully, and without disturbing the

1. Easton points out that the Jewish dislike for writing was a dislike for written law -- not for the very act of writing. Since the gospel material was not Jewish law, there would be no reason for Jews to object to writing it down.

The first of these is the fact that the
 second of these is the fact that the
 third of these is the fact that the
 fourth of these is the fact that the
 fifth of these is the fact that the
 sixth of these is the fact that the
 seventh of these is the fact that the
 eighth of these is the fact that the
 ninth of these is the fact that the
 tenth of these is the fact that the
 eleventh of these is the fact that the
 twelfth of these is the fact that the
 thirteenth of these is the fact that the
 fourteenth of these is the fact that the
 fifteenth of these is the fact that the
 sixteenth of these is the fact that the
 seventeenth of these is the fact that the
 eighteenth of these is the fact that the
 nineteenth of these is the fact that the
 twentieth of these is the fact that the
 twenty-first of these is the fact that the
 twenty-second of these is the fact that the
 twenty-third of these is the fact that the
 twenty-fourth of these is the fact that the
 twenty-fifth of these is the fact that the
 twenty-sixth of these is the fact that the
 twenty-seventh of these is the fact that the
 twenty-eighth of these is the fact that the
 twenty-ninth of these is the fact that the
 thirtieth of these is the fact that the
 thirty-first of these is the fact that the
 thirty-second of these is the fact that the
 thirty-third of these is the fact that the
 thirty-fourth of these is the fact that the
 thirty-fifth of these is the fact that the
 thirty-sixth of these is the fact that the
 thirty-seventh of these is the fact that the
 thirty-eighth of these is the fact that the
 thirty-ninth of these is the fact that the
 fortieth of these is the fact that the
 forty-first of these is the fact that the
 forty-second of these is the fact that the
 forty-third of these is the fact that the
 forty-fourth of these is the fact that the
 forty-fifth of these is the fact that the
 forty-sixth of these is the fact that the
 forty-seventh of these is the fact that the
 forty-eighth of these is the fact that the
 forty-ninth of these is the fact that the
 fiftieth of these is the fact that the
 fifty-first of these is the fact that the
 fifty-second of these is the fact that the
 fifty-third of these is the fact that the
 fifty-fourth of these is the fact that the
 fifty-fifth of these is the fact that the
 fifty-sixth of these is the fact that the
 fifty-seventh of these is the fact that the
 fifty-eighth of these is the fact that the
 fifty-ninth of these is the fact that the
 sixtieth of these is the fact that the
 sixty-first of these is the fact that the
 sixty-second of these is the fact that the
 sixty-third of these is the fact that the
 sixty-fourth of these is the fact that the
 sixty-fifth of these is the fact that the
 sixty-sixth of these is the fact that the
 sixty-seventh of these is the fact that the
 sixty-eighth of these is the fact that the
 sixty-ninth of these is the fact that the
 seventieth of these is the fact that the
 seventy-first of these is the fact that the
 seventy-second of these is the fact that the
 seventy-third of these is the fact that the
 seventy-fourth of these is the fact that the
 seventy-fifth of these is the fact that the
 seventy-sixth of these is the fact that the
 seventy-seventh of these is the fact that the
 seventy-eighth of these is the fact that the
 seventy-ninth of these is the fact that the
 eightieth of these is the fact that the
 eighty-first of these is the fact that the
 eighty-second of these is the fact that the
 eighty-third of these is the fact that the
 eighty-fourth of these is the fact that the
 eighty-fifth of these is the fact that the
 eighty-sixth of these is the fact that the
 eighty-seventh of these is the fact that the
 eighty-eighth of these is the fact that the
 eighty-ninth of these is the fact that the
 ninetieth of these is the fact that the
 ninety-first of these is the fact that the
 ninety-second of these is the fact that the
 ninety-third of these is the fact that the
 ninety-fourth of these is the fact that the
 ninety-fifth of these is the fact that the
 ninety-sixth of these is the fact that the
 ninety-seventh of these is the fact that the
 ninety-eighth of these is the fact that the
 ninety-ninth of these is the fact that the
 hundredth of these is the fact that the

form-units as they existed in the oral tradition, is demonstrated by the gospel material itself. This does not necessarily mean that there were earlier complete gospels. It means only that gospel material circulated partly in oral and partly in written forms, as sermon notes might circulate, and usually in small block of one or more form-units.

2. It is interesting in this connection to remember that Papias reported Matthew's writing of the Logia in the Hebrew tongue. If we accept the fact that Matthew wrote, probably others wrote too. It is not necessary to presume that the material remained in oral form until Mark used it. Nor can it be argued with any force that the writing was put off indefinitely because the primitive church momentarily expected the Parousia. If that expectation operated to hinder writing, why did Paul write? Paul himself reports that among the Thessalonians the expectation had led to laziness and a bad social outlook. He considered it abnormal and undesirable. The contention that expectation of the Parousia would postpone written records even until the time of Mark will not bear investigation. A middle-of-the-road view is nearer the truth. There were no stenographers to write down the material instantly. Nor was it written down during the first days, when eyewitnesses of retentive memory could recite the material freely. But with the beginning of the gentile mission and the dropping off of

eyewitnesses, the need and the material met on common ground.

3. We may again note the much-quoted words of Luke 1.1-4: "Forasmuch as many have taken in hand to draw up a narrative concerning those matters which have been fulfilled among us, even as they delivered them unto us, who from the beginning were eyewitnesses and ministers of the word, it seemed good to me also, having traced the course of all things accurately from the first, to write unto thee in order, most excellent Theophilus; that thou mightest know the certainty concerning the things wherein thou wast instructed". These words have been interpreted in a multitude of ways, but we can reasonably draw the following conclusions: A. There were written records previous to Luke -- just when or how many we do not know, but apparently they were fairly numerous. It is entirely possible that these were short collections of form-units bearing on similar subjects. B. The source of the information is traced to "eyewitnesses and ministers of the word". That is, the information is genuine. It does not come out of thin air, but from people closely associated with the facts. C. The information was still in such condition, written or oral, that Luke could claim to have traced the material accurately and to have put it in order. D. Luke's new record appears to have been written as a verification of instruction Theophilus had previously received, perhaps partly written and partly oral.

Now the entire teaching will be verified at once. E. The previous records were apparently incomplete, more or less scattered, and certainly insufficient. Otherwise, why should Luke write?

All these considerations support our contention that the form-units early began to be written down, in shorter or longer portions, and with an admittedly unliterary purpose. These writings were insufficient for the needs of the later community, but they were the reliable bridge between eyewitnesses and the evangelists. It is unsafe to claim too much for Luke's preface, yet it can justly serve as supporting evidence to a situation already nearly self-evident.

4. It has been the constant need of gospel criticism to take recourse to some type of previous document. The most firmly established theory is that relating to Q -- a document whose existence is almost universally accepted. Yet it must always be remembered that we regard Q as an actuality only because we see the need for such a document in order to explain what now remains for us to study. No one has ever seen Q, and there is wide variation in its reconstructions. On a similar basis, certain scholars have proposed theories concerning Ur-Marcus, Proto-Luke, the sources L and M, etc.. It is not necessary that we discuss the arguments for such documents. Their proponents can state the arguments for themselves. But it is our purpose to note

that, for a satisfactory solution to the synoptic question, a variety of sources seems to be necessary. Q is not sufficient by itself, and the other proposals are not as firmly evidenced by the extant material. An intelligent reconstruction of the history of the synoptic materials demands recourse to Q and yet other written records prior to the work of our evangelists. If these records had existed in written form in 30 A.D. or 35 A.D., the synoptic problem could scarcely have arisen. They would have stood so close to the facts and been so complete in themselves that later gospels would have been unnecessary. The fact that they came after the oral period, yet showed little Greek influence, and were old and varied enough to allow notable differences between the synoptic writing which were based on them -- all this tends to show that the material was in part reduced to writing about the time the active gentile mission began.

5. What has just been said ought not to lead to the conclusion that all the gospel material was written down. Parts of the synoptics probably existed in the form of oral tradition until the time the evangelists used them. Other parts were written in groups of a few units relating to a similar subject. Q itself was such a grouping -- probably the longest one -- consisting of a number of sayings-units.

6. Apart from the consideration of Q, Proto-Luke, or Ur-Marcus, the following synoptic portions are among those

which have been suggested (by Easton, Albertz, and others) as possibly reproducing certain of these pre-Marcian written cycles: A. Mk. 2.1-3.6 (Mt. 9.1-17, 12.1-14, Lk. 5.17-6.11), including five controversies. The argument that this is a copy of some pre-Marcian collection is supported by the note in Mk. 3.6, "And the Pharisees went out and straightway took counsel against him, how they might destroy him". This is the sort of statement we should expect in the passion story, not early in the third chapter of our account. If Lk. 6.11 and Mt. 12.14 refer to the same incident, it is noteworthy that these evangelists put the reference nearer the close of the ministry, where it naturally comes. Easton notes that the idea of Mk. 3.6 recurs in Mk. 12.13, and suggests that the two verses were originally consecutive, but were bisected by Mark in order to introduce the intervening material. This is not necessarily true. The mention of Pharisees and Herodians in both verses is not sufficient warrant for such a conclusion. One has a right to believe that both sets of controversies were a single pre-Marcian group, but it is a very difficult fact to establish. B. The section of Mk. 6.30 to 8.26 has long been recognized as especially full of duplication. If a split is made at Mk. 7.37 we have two stories of miraculous feeding, a journey over the lake, controversy, departure from Galilee, a saying about bread, and a healing. This could be explained on the assumption

that there were two versions current, probably both written. Mark combined the two. C. The same conclusion is suggested by comparing Mk. 9.30-50 with Mk. 10.32-45. D. Easton suggests that Mk. 4 was circulated separately, because of the manner in which the boat is used as a connecting link between various sections. There is a good chance that this chapter was so circulated, but the reason given is inadequate. Mark himself could introduce the boat as a connecting link, just as well as some earlier compiler. E. If it is agreed that the passion story circulated as a multiple unit by itself, then there would be strong probability that it had a pre-Marcian written setting. That the evangelists are particularly alike in their stories of the passion adds some weight to this possibility. If the three worked from written sources, then their close similarity in this extended section (closer than in any other part of the gospel) would become more understandable. F. One may also point to homogeneous collections such as the Kingdom parables in Matthew as possible pre-Marcian collections. Another example is the series of miracles in Mk. 4.35-5.43. It is only natural that items dealing with the same theme should be grouped together for teaching purposes. One must be careful how far he carries his search in this direction, especially in view of Matthew's known tendency to group like with like. Yet, if Matthew had this tendency, why would it not have been a tendency among

teachers much earlier than Matthew?

These are only suggestions, and incapable of absolute proof. Yet there are circumstances which make the suggestions reasonable. Apart from these smaller sections, the fact that Q had a definite literary existence covers the pre-synoptic history of many sayings-units. Just when Q was reduced to written form we cannot now determine. We have made suggestions that would indicate an early date, about the time the gentile mission began.

It is not necessary to establish dates in order to see how the foregoing considerations verify the historicity of the gospel material in the light of Formgeschichte. The evangelists received their material in form-units, either singly or in collected groups. Perhaps some of these had never been reduced to writing. But the evidence indicates that many of them had probably been written at one time or another before Mark. Such writing helped to stabilize the course of tradition. We are not afraid of oral tradition. We no longer suffer from the notion that oral tradition would mutilate the facts. Indeed, our evidence points in just the opposite direction. But if, in addition to oral tradition, some of the form-units were also preserved in writing, those written versions would be a further influence in retaining the tradition in a stable and unadulterated condition.

C. The method is chiefly concerned with literary forms. This fact enables it to offer a basis for historical judgments.

We can summarize the previous arguments by saying that Formgeschichte actually does offer basis for decisions regarding the historicity of the gospel material. Formgeschichte need not be relegated to a dark corner, there to trifle away its time in making one list after another of the various forms found in the gospels. Such lists are almost always at variance in regard to terminology and classification. It has been our purpose to point out the fallacy which surrounds this view of Formgeschichte. Classification may be the first step, but in the long run it is the least important. It makes little difference whether a particular sayings-unit is called paradigm, apothegm, or pronouncement. Since it makes little difference, our own classification has been kept as simple as is consistent with the formgeschichtlich view of the material. We hasten to pass classification, which is a mechanical sort of thing, and ask what contribution Formgeschichte can make beyond mere routine. It is here that historicity enters the picture. Since we can clearly identify certain gospel forms, and since we can at least partially trace the history of these forms, we are warranted in trying to trace them back to their

origin and ascertain what connection they had with the historical Jesus. Part of this tracing has already been done, and part remains for the following chapters. That which has already been done is largely in connection with the forms themselves, and may be summarized from the historical angle as follows:

1. The forms are genuine, not imaginative. They must have had a form-history, and that history is inseparably related to the historicity of the subject matter itself.

2. The characteristics of the forms can be identified. Many of them are unique; others have parallels in either religious or non-religious literature of the day. They must all be viewed in the light of first-century literary ideas, not in the light of the twentieth century. When so viewed, there is a presupposition in favor of the historicity of the gospel story about Jesus -- a story which would not have been recorded except as there was a demand to know the facts about him, and a story best presented as a simple narration of his words and deeds rather than a complex analysis of chronological details.

3. Since the synoptic forms are preeminently the forms which a religious man in the Palestinian environment of the first century would have been accustomed to use, the material appears congruous with its historical and literary setting. It is not invented, nor forced into unnatural molds. The

question may then be asked, What literary forms would a man choose if he wished to tell a story simply? The answer -- he would use those most natural to his age, and closest at hand. This is just what the early Christians did in formulating the story of Jesus, and it is a strong verification of the historicity of that story. To cite a modern parallel: If the story of a presidential inauguration appeared today in the form of a fable, with animals taking the parts of people involved, a reader would at once say, "Here is a clever literary man, weaving a current story into ancient imaginative form, in order to introduce his own political views and satirize the president"; but if we meet the story of the inauguration in racy newspaper English, we know that it is fundamentally true. In somewhat the same way, Christians of the first century used literary forms which were to them normal and almost unavoidable. They told a good tale simply. They did not force their material into an unnatural literary setting.

4. We have seen that among the Hebrews oral tradition was remarkably tenacious of facts, and that in things religious there was especial interest in verbatim accuracy.

5. We have seen how the whole course of synoptic study shows that the evangelists did not draw their materials out of thin air, nor did they invent them. Our gospels culminated a process of development which included, in

addition to oral tradition, at least one major and probably several minor collections of written material. These collections had the same literary forms as are represented in the canonical gospels, and included part of the same material.

It is apparent that literary form is not a thing separate from life and history, but a vital part thereof. Formgeschichte is concerned first with literary forms, but it is this very fact which constitutes it a valid working basis for historical decisions. After we have made certain preliminary examinations about the validity of the literary form, we are warranted in applying this information to the solution of the historical problem. In the latter phase there is always room for some reservations, and we must beware of mere subjectivity. But we have demonstrated the validity of the method, and have found our way to preliminary conclusions. The following chapter will approach the same subject in greater detail, and will further verify the historicity of the gospel account.

IV. FURTHER VERIFICATION OF THE RELIABILITY OF THE GOSPEL PICTURE OF THE HISTORICAL JESUS.

A. Verisimilitude as a proof of the early origin and historical reliability of the gospel forms, especially as found in Mark.

1. The presence of details.

It has always been recognized that the gospels present a maximum of narration in a minimum of words. Detail is a feature of the forms -- not detail in the sense of arithmetical or scientific accuracy, but in the sense of establishing verisimilitude. The details give a sense of trustworthiness, as if the writer had been in touch with the original scene, or at least had received very definite information about that scene. This feature of the gospel forms has never been adequately developed.

Bultmann is certainly in error when he assumes that the details of the gospels have been added by time, just as the story of a gossip expands with each new telling. In certain cases it is true that Matthew and Luke expand upon Mark's detail in retelling his material, but we are not bound to deny that they had any valid basis for such additions. If an early story could exist side by side in two versions of the same form, as in the case of Mark 1-8, it is entirely

possible that these and other portions existed in a third version available to writers nearer the Palestinian scene. We dare not kill the entire concept of author, even if it is largely supplanted by that of compiler. As a matter of fact, historical details tend to fade and become dull with the passing of time, and the presence of vivid verisimilitude in the gospels is strong evidence of the existence of the gospel material in essentially its present form shortly after 30 A.D.. The date of final compilation of Matthew or Luke has little to do with this argument. It is not even necessary that our material be classified as apothegm, story, etc.. Yet verisimilitude justly comes within the bounds of Formgeschichte, for its presence or absence is a definite characteristic of form.

W. M. Flinders Petrie has tried to show¹ that there are about twelve cases where, on textual grounds, the account of Matthew appears older and more verisimilar than that of Mark. It is true that some of his examples give this impression, but it is an impression based upon insufficient analysis. Mere brevity never establishes the antiquity of a passage. Moreover, we cannot deny that in some cases a tradition recorded at a late date might be more accurate than one recorded earlier. It might actually be older. If Matthew has such material, it does not invalidate the Marcan authority, but supplements it.

1. Petrie, in GG.

Our task is now to consider the whole field of gospel material and seek out those details which indicate a definite connection with the historical event. This effort is surprisingly rewarding. It demonstrates beyond a doubt that Mark is infinitely superior in the number and careful use of significant details. Many of Mark's details, when reproduced by either of the other synoptics, lose their sharp edges and sink into the common level of the story. This is exactly what passing time does to any literary form. We shall list these details in some fullness in order to prove that: A. Mark most clearly presents the event as it originally transpired in the life of Jesus. B. The form in Mark has been least influenced by passing time, and by constant retelling of the story. C. Assuming that perhaps twenty years elapsed between the dates of Mark and Matthew-Luke, we can see that the sharp corners of many details were rounded off during that period. D. The fact that the tradition tended to reduce, rather than expand, indicates that the form-geschichtlich method makes a real contribution in establishing the historicity of the gospel account, especially as found in Mark. By applying the rules of form-history we can show that the years from 30 A.D. to 85 A.D. did not add insignificant details and extend the story, but reduced the amount of detail and condensed the story. In other words, Formgeschichte leads us to a view exactly opposite the notion of many critics. The account of Mark reproduces

the items almost as they were first formulated after 30 A.D., with a larger share of historically trustworthy detail than has been realized. Instead of investing the story with a maze of cloudy doubts, the years from 30 A.D. to 65 A.D. relieved it of unnecessary and hard-to-remember items, but preserved both the core of the tradition and a large share of those pointed details which were necessary to the verisimilitude and integrity of the story.

A warning must be noted at this point: Remember that Mark, if he had Q, apparently made little use of it. He certainly did not reproduce the discourse as did Matthew and Luke. Therefore this particular type of investigation finds its reward in searching the narrative rather than the discourse, for verbal teachings are not likely to deal with the geographical, temporal, or other details of the scene. The element of verisimilitude in discourse will be discussed, but the approach is somewhat different. A comparison of the narratives in Mark and Matthew-Luke will show that the Marcan narrative is usually longer, due to the greater exactness of the tradition at the earlier date. This is exactly what Formgeschichte would lead us to expect. We must be careful not to allow the greater length of Matthew and Luke (due to Q material) to blind us to the fact that the Marcan narratives are almost always longer than the corresponding narratives in Matthew-Luke, even when the narrative portion is largely swallowed up as a setting for some saying or

Parable of Jesus. It is strange that this fact has not been noticed by former investigators. Dibelius, Bultmann, and others, work on the assumption that the narratives lengthen and details become sharper with continued retelling and passing of time. If this is a law of folk literature, then the gospels do not follow it. Either the law is wrong, or the gospels are an exception. I believe that Mark is more than folk literature -- it is an account of historical events, held in such high esteem that popular respect tended to shorten the account rather than add spurious details. It was the kernel of the gospel that the early church revered.

Why are there details in the gospel? There are three possible answers to the question: A. Because they belong there as part of the historical account. The presence of details thus becomes the evidence of an eyewitness or other reliable authority back of the account. B. As a literary device, to heighten the color of the story. But let us remember that our authors were not trained literary men. They were not primarily interested in telling a vivid story for its own sake. Moreover, if this were the motive, the later accounts would have more accurate detail than the earlier, for each succeeding compiler would vie with his sources in an effort to surpass them. The next few pages will show that this is not the case. C. There might be a theological motive involved. This consideration will also be discussed, and we will see that the presence of verisimilar detail and of

theological purposes do not coincide in the gospel material. Accordingly, the first answer to our question is the correct one, and Formgeschichte does tend to validate the historical core of the Marcan tradition.

In this study we must seek very specific evidence. For example, the question of order and chronology has little to offer us. The word "straightway" is found at frequent intervals throughout the gospel, yet it can scarcely be interpreted in a highly temporal sense. It means little more than "and then". Moreover, Mark's fundamental order of events in Galilee, Perea, and Jerusalem is evidence only for the stark outline of the gospel, and contributes little to our present purpose. Geographical details are often of secondary importance. The death and temple scenes must obviously be placed in Jerusalem, regardless of whether the location was part of the original tradition. Likewise, swine could only be drowned near water, public speeches would naturally be delivered in synagogues or the open fields, and privacy could best be obtained in wilderness or mountain districts. There are a large number of such references to places of solitude, e.g., Mk. 1.45 (Lk. 4.16). One or two of these might be attributed to the literary interest of our author or compiler, but their presence as a common factor in the sayings and dialogue forms, as well as in the miracle forms, makes it evident that the forms preserve for us a historical picture of this feature of Jesus' activity.

historical purposes is not suitable in the present material.
Accordingly, the first answer to our question is the correct
one, and the second answer is that the historical
view of the Roman condition.

In this study we must seek very specific evidence.
For example, the question of order and chronology has little
to offer us. The word "chronology" is found in the text

historical purposes the text, but it can scarcely be
inserted in a single sentence. It seems little
more than "and then", "however", "but", "and" and so on.

of events in Galilee, Perea, and Jerusalem is evidence only
for the order of events at the time, and not necessarily little
to our present purpose. Chronological details are often of
secondary importance. The date and length of events must

ordinarily be placed in Jerusalem, regardless of whether the
location was part of the original question. Likewise,
events could only be placed near each other, and a single event

actually be carried in Jerusalem in the open fields, and
primary events could be placed in Jerusalem or elsewhere
elsewhere. There are a large number of such references to

places of events, e.g., Mt. 1:12 (1:12), Mt. 2:12 (2:12),
of these might be attributed to the literary interest of our
reader or compiler, and their presence as a source factor in

the writing of the Gospel, as well as in the Gospel text.
There is evidence that the Gospel writers for us a historical
picture of the life of Jesus, activity.

The chief characteristic of the geographical items is this: In every case where such an item constitutes a necessary part of the form, it does so naturally and logically. If we had an account of swine being drowned on a mountain top, or of Jesus cleansing the temple at Caesarea Philippi, the very method of Formgeschichte would immediately fail. It would be obvious that details were introduced just to make a good story, without reference to either form or fact. Not one case of such illogical grafting can be found in the synoptic gospels. In every case the geographical detail harmonizes with other items making up the form of that particular unit.

Again, there are geographical references such as that in the healing of blind Bartimaeus: "And they come to Jericho; and as he went out from Jericho, with his disciples and a great multitude, the son of Timaeus, Bartimaeus, a blind beggar, was sitting by the way side".¹ Now, why should this item be definitely located by all three synoptists in Jericho? Is there any "literary purpose" involved here? any theological purpose? Certainly not! This miracle form could be introduced at any point in the gospel narrative, were it not that the geographical detail of Jericho is attached to it. In assembling his material Mark apparently found a form-unit which was located in Jericho, so he naturally introduced it at just this point, on Jesus' way from

1. Mark 10.46.

Galilee to Jerusalem. The mention of Jericho must have been part of the form-tradition, as no other reason for its mention can be imagined. Mark retained it because he was an honest compiler, desirous of retaining every integral and trustworthy portion of a form-narrative already perhaps thirty years old.

Another notable instance is the reference to "villages of Caesarea Philippi".¹ This is a unique statement, but it is in accord with the general principle that tradition never pictured Jesus as actually being in a Greek city. He was in the native villages that clustered about the Greek center. Compare also Mark 7.24, "And from thence he arose and went away into the borders of Tyre and Sidon".² Of this reference the same statement can be made. The relationship between Jesus and Greeks is always treated as a strictly individual relationship. Certainly this has no literary motive, even less a theological one. Mark was writing at Rome, and would have preferred to omit all references giving Jesus' work a narrow or purely Judaistic interpretation. The only reason for these clear-cut references is that they became part of the traditional forms at an early date, and Mark retained those forms for the sake of historicity.

Although these details are interesting in their own right, their authenticity is established more clearly when put

1. Mk. 8.27; Mt. 16.13 has "the parts of Caesarea Philippi".
 2. Mt. 15.21 has "parts".

...the position of Jordan must have been
...of the four-fifths, as no other reason for the position
...can be imagined. ...it is possible to see an honest
...of retaining every integral and indivi-
...of a four-fifths nearly perfect unity
...years old.

...the reference to "villages
of German origin". This is a unique statement, but it
is in accord with the general principle that tradition never
places facts as actually being in a given state. It was in
the native village that situated about the Greek center.
Germany also kept it, "and then there is more and more
only into the history of time and space". Of this reference
the same statement can be made. The relationship between
Germans and Greeks is always treated as a strictly historical
relationship. Certainly this has no literary value, even
from a theological one. But was writing at home, and
would have preferred to call it "historical giving them" words
a narrow or purely historical inquiry. The only reason
for these short-cut references is that they become part of the
traditional form at an early date, and have retained those
forms for the sake of history.

Although these details are interesting in their own
right, their authenticity is established more clearly when the

side by side with a host of other details, all of which show the gospel forms to have originated and become largely fixed in the period from 30 A.D. to 40 A.D.. It is to these details that we now turn.

a. The birth stories are notable for their lack of detail but their profusion of the poetic element. The stories of shepherds, wise men, etc., are of course not found in Mark, and can have no support from our general confidence in Mark's accuracy. Among the scanty details are the names of Mary and Joseph, and the statement of Luke 1.38, "And Mary arose in these days and went into the hill country with haste, into a city of Judah". The latter is of little consequence, so far as Formgeschichte is concerned. Worthy of notice, however, are: Luke 2.2, "This was the first enrolment made when Quirinius was governor of Syria"; Mt. 2.16, "from two years old and under"; and Luke 2.42, "And when he was twelve years old, they went up after the custom of the feast". The first is obviously an explanatory statement of the compiler, and warns us against possible editorial interjections. The second and third are based on accurate traditions, as neither two nor twelve is a number with any mystical significance. Although the birth stories have as little historical support from Formgeschichte as any part of the gospels, we at least see that the forms were not utterly divorced from the historical scene.

b. The baptism account records no historical detail of significance -- nor indeed does the temptation. The "forty days" of Mk. 1.13 is merely a round number to indicate a considerable period of time. It is a good thing that Matthew and Luke show so little detail in these stories, depicting a period in Jesus' life not covered by Mark. If these stories were full of fictitious detail, then they would demonstrate the Dibelius-Bultmann contention that passing time spoiled the historical narrative. They would obviously be literary inventions. But the facts demonstrate our contention that the tradition kept historical and semi-historical items in their own courses. The two were not confused.

c. In the calling of the four, Mk. 1.16-20 and parallels, we get a clear illustration of verisimilitude in all the accounts, and particular detail in the account of Mark. "And passing along by the sea of Galilee, he saw Simon and Andrew the brother of Simon casting a net in the sea: for they were fishers".¹ Mt. 4.18 has essentially the same wording. It is no mere triviality to point out the realism with which this scene is described -- Jesus walking by the sea, the men at work with their nets, the statement of brotherly relationship, and the mention of their trade as fishermen. Beyond doubt all these details were part of the form at the very beginning, for without them the invitation to "become fishers of men" would be pointless and difficult to understand.

1. Mk. 1.16.

Yet it is just this phrase from the lips of Jesus that the form-unit was intended to preserve. Thus the entire story exists as a unit, and must so have existed from a period shortly after the event, when the scene could still be vividly recalled to mind and the peculiar appropriateness of Jesus' invitation remained unique. This is the type of passage which clearly vindicates the *formgeschichtlich* approach. No portion of the form could be omitted without destroying the whole -- a situation which indicates that the entire form came into being at one time. If one element or saying in such a form can be shown to have some claim to historical worth, then the entire unit is vindicated. The earlier Marcan account, true to rule, includes a sharp detail omitted by Matthew, namely, "...They left their father in the boat with the hired servants, and went after him".¹ The later writing of Matthew has, in comparison, a dull edge. The brothers merely "left the boat and their father, and followed him".² Mark's mention of hired servants, certainly not the usual thing among Galilean fishermen, gives a touch of reality as well as verisimilitude. It is impossible to reconstruct what details Mark may have omitted from the original form, but it is apparent that passing time detracted detail rather than added it. (Luke has special material from L at this point, including the miraculous catch of fishes.

1. Mk. 1.20.

2. Mt. 4.22.

It is a miracle form in contrast to the sayings-form of Mark. Yet even the miracle form from L has its touch of verifying detail; "James and John, sons of Zebedee, who were partners with Simon"....."And when they had brought their boats to land, they left all, and followed him.")¹

d. An excellent sample of the kind of irrelevant detail actually added by passing time is found in contrasting Mk. 1.30 with Lk. 4.38. Mark says that Peter's mother-in-law "lay sick of a fever" -- a direct, clear statement. Luke says she "was holden with a great fever". The gossip has been at work. The difference is not in detail of fact, but in the verbal trimmings.

e. In Mk. 2.3, the story of the paralytic, we read, "And they come, bringing unto him a man sick of the palsy, borne of four". The detail regarding the number of bearers is found in Mark alone. Matthew and Luke omit it. To Mark this detail was significant. It constituted part of the form which came to him. Were it possible for us to see the form in its original entirety, it may have included other details also. But it is clear that Mark represents, if not the original form in its entirety, a conflation of pertinent detail rather than an inflation by unreliable additions. Mark alone notes that the roof had to be "broken up" to let the sick man down.² Matthew, true to his method, omits the

1. Lk. 5.10-11.

2. Mk. 2.4.

detail of the roof scene entirely, and Luke treats it in much more general terms.

f. Mark 2.14 (and parallels) speaks of "Levi the son of Alphaeus sitting at the place of toll". There is absolutely no reason to include this detail unless it was a fact. It does not contribute to the verisimilitude of the rest of the incident, and could have been omitted so far as the essential of the story is concerned. Its presence indicates its right to a place in the original form, and must date back nearly to the time the incident happened.

g. Mark 2.26 is the only one of the three accounts to include the time detail -- "When Abiathar was high priest". This may be Mark's own addition, but its presence seems thoroughly in keeping with the rabbinic style of the argument over plucking grain.

h. Mark 3.6, "And the Pharisees went out, and straightway with the Herodians took counsel against him, how they might destroy him". The later accounts omit mention of the Herodians as partners to the plot, placing the full blame upon the Pharisees. Now, unless Mark had definitely received mention of the Herodians in his own form-tradition, he would probably have done the same thing, as he is often at pains to belabor the Pharisees. The gospel in which we would least expect to find this reference is the only one that has it. The time factor is responsible for the dulled edge of the later account.

1. There are cases in which a story existed in two forms so obviously different that both were retained in their own rights. The centurion's servant is a case in point, Mt. 8.5-13 and Lk. 7.1-10. Both accounts have good verisimilitude and smack of a well preserved tradition. But the details themselves are different. Matthew recounts that the centurion came to Jesus; Luke, that he sent first a delegation of Jews and then his own servants. In spite of these differences, each version is a complete example of the miracle form, including the need for faith and the final pronouncement of Jesus. There is no exhortation to secrecy, but such an exhortation is not always present in the miracle form. The form is appropriate to the story, and testifies to the literary ability of the two different compilers. It is evidence that the Christian community handled the form-units with great care, and would not willingly see them vitiated. If it is argued that the differing traditions might reflect different territorial accounts of the event, I reply that Paul was not the only one who did any travelling in the first century. If oral tradition had any influence at all, it could not be indefinitely confined to one church or community.

j. Luke 7.36-50 embodies a piece of single tradition, probably from L, which almost surpasses in verisimilitude any other form-unit of the entire gospel. Note how accurately the anointing scene is described. It is in Simon's house;

there is an "alabaster cruse"; the woman was "standing behind at his feet", a description that must be accurate because of the very awkwardness of the position described; weeping, wiping and kissing the feet, and the description of the sinful character of the woman, all play their part. It is impossible to check the accuracy of details in Jesus' speech, but if detail is an element of form at all, there must have been a definite historical setting behind the account of this anointing.

k. The story of the stilling of the tempest¹ is the gospel's best example of how time dulled rather than sharpened the details of the forms. We cannot be responsible for the interpretation of this event by our evangelists, nor shall we quibble over whether "Peace, be still" was spoken to the waves or the men. As form-critics our interest is in the verisimilitude of the details. The following items deserve mention: A. Mark alone has a temporal detail, "when even was come".² B. Mark alone makes mention of Jesus' physical condition; "they take him with them, even as he was, in the boat".³ This obviously carries on the detail of Mk. 4.1, which pictured Jesus speaking from a boat (a detail omitted by both Matthew and Luke), and is intended to tell us that Jesus did not get out of the boat before setting to sea.⁴ C. "He himself was in the stern, asleep on the cushion".

1. Mk. 4.35-42, Mt. 8.23-27, Lk. 8.22-25.

2. Mk. 4.35.

3. Mk. 4.36.

4. Mk. 4.38.

How could there be a more photographic description? The form has retained the exactness of an eyewitness. We learn what part of the boat Jesus occupied, that he was asleep, and that he was on the cushion. If one wished to quibble he could argue that the presence of a definite article indicates that there was one and only one cushion in the boat. But certainly cushions were not customary equipment on the fishing boats of Galilee, and this mention almost clinches the historicity of the event recounted. D. Mark alone gives the words of the awakened Jesus, "Peace, be still".¹ True to form-history, Matthew and Luke file the sharp edge from the story and inanely remark that he "rebuked" the wind and waves. The accuracy of direct discourse is replaced by the generality of indirect discourse. Not one of the items mentioned above is reproduced in either of the later gospels. Mark alone is early enough to reach back and preserve a detailed tradition, the form of which preserves the touch of historicity. Now, it might be argued that Mark introduced all these details for the sake of writing a good story. But the mass of this evidence indicates that such was not Mark's purpose. Even Papias testified to the same thing.² We are driven to the conclusion that the Marcan account received its present accurate form in approximately the period from 30 A.D. to 40 A.D., and that Mark did not tamper much with the details.

1. Mk. 4.39.

2. I.e., Mark wrote accurately, but not in order.

1. In the story of the raising of Jairus' daughter the various accounts have a number of details alike, but in different order. Mark's claim to a more faithful reproduction of history lies in the verbatim record of Jesus' exact words, "He saith unto her, Talitha cumi; which is, being interpreted, Damsel, I say unto thee, Arise".¹ It is sometimes argued that occasional Aramaic phrases are retained to heighten the mysterious effect of the gospel upon Greek readers. This effect is largely imaginary. It is much more reasonable to suppose that the original tradition embodied the exact Aramaic words of Jesus as an inseparable element of the form. Their presence in Mark indicates not only that he preserved the early form, but that the event was historical. It might be said, with Moffatt, that Mark's "so-called Aramaisms are sometimes not real Aramaisms;when sifted, they prove an Aramaic background for the tradition, not an Aramaic document which has been translated, not even a cast of style which can be described as particularly Hebraistic".² Moffatt anticipated the form-critic by recognizing that not only actual Aramaic quotations but the Aramaic coloring of Mark's whole work is a reflection of its close touch with the very oldest tradition. The latter would naturally have been in Aramaic.

M. Mark 6.1-6 differs from the other stories of the rejection at Nazareth in definitely stating that Jesus was a

1. Mk. 5.41.

2. Moffatt, Intro. to the Literature of the New Testament, 237.

carpenter. Matthew and Mark are in essential agreement regarding the names of the brothers and the existence of sisters; Luke makes mention only of the father, Joseph. On the whole, Mark's verisimilitude is somewhat better.

n. Although the items on the death of John the Baptizer might not come directly under the title of our dissertation, it is a good sample of how a religious-historical theme found its setting in accepted literary form. As usual, the earlier or Marcan treatment is longer and much more exact.¹ There is excellent detail in the description of Herod's relationship with John, the criticism directed against him by the Baptizer, and the reason for John's arrest. Mark gives an especially intimate and accurate account of the plot between Herodias and her daughter. We are even told that Herod had a wholesome fear of John, recognizing him as a righteous man.² We can feel the social pressure around the banquet table, forcing him to keep his rash promise. Mark then stipulates that Herod sent "a soldier of his guard"³, in contrast to an ordinary soldier or guard, and had John beheaded "in the prison".⁴ By adding the account of the delivery of John's head on the charger, and the girl taking it to her mother, Mark offers us at least fifty per cent more relevant detail than does Matthew. Why should he do this? Surely the

1. Mk. 6.14-29, Mt. 14.1-12, Lk. 9.9.

2. Mk. 6.20.

3. Mk. 6.27.

4. Mk. 6.28.

life and activities of John were not his chief interest, and the gospel account would lose little by the excision of the whole passage. There is but one answer. Having decided to include the item about John's death, Mark included it in its earliest, fullest, and most authentic form. He did not tamper with the tradition, but retained it as it came to him either from the disciples of John or, less likely, as part of the Jesus tradition. Probably there were many other stories about John which, if they were known to us, would parallel the gospel forms about Jesus and would give the historical approach of *Formgeschichte* a decided impetus.

Mark did not concoct his material out of thin air. The preservation of biographical material in formal blocks was not the unusual, but the customary procedure of the time. There would be no cause for Mark to invent this story about John, or to make it "conform" to some stilted literary style. Its likeness to the Jesus material is a vindication of the historical basis behind the form-units in which the latter was preserved.

o. In the feeding of the five thousand¹ our earliest record preserves a number of significant details. For example, "And they went away in the boat to a desert place apart". A desert and a boat would certainly not be associated together unless the tradition was very clear on the point. Men go to sea in boats, and to the desert on

1. Mk. 6.30-46, and parallels.

the first thing I saw when I stepped out of the car was a vast, open landscape. The air was fresh and cool, and the sun was shining brightly. I felt a sense of freedom and adventure. The road ahead was long and winding, and I knew that I was about to embark on a journey that would change my life. I took a deep breath and stepped out onto the road. The first few miles were easy, but then I started to feel a little tired. I knew that I was going to have a long drive home, but I was determined to make it. I kept driving, and the landscape changed around me. I saw fields of golden wheat, and then I saw a small village with a church and a school. I stopped for a moment to rest, and then I continued on my way. The road was still long and winding, but I was now more confident. I knew that I was capable of anything, and I was determined to see this journey through to the end. I kept driving, and the sun began to set. The sky was a beautiful mix of orange and red, and the stars were starting to appear. I felt a sense of peace and tranquility. I knew that I was home, and I was happy to be there. I took a deep breath and stepped out of the car. The first thing I saw when I stepped out of the car was a vast, open landscape. The air was fresh and cool, and the sun was shining brightly. I felt a sense of freedom and adventure. The road ahead was long and winding, and I knew that I was about to embark on a journey that would change my life. I took a deep breath and stepped out onto the road. The first few miles were easy, but then I started to feel a little tired. I knew that I was going to have a long drive home, but I was determined to make it. I kept driving, and the landscape changed around me. I saw fields of golden wheat, and then I saw a small village with a church and a school. I stopped for a moment to rest, and then I continued on my way. The road was still long and winding, but I was now more confident. I knew that I was capable of anything, and I was determined to see this journey through to the end. I kept driving, and the sun began to set. The sky was a beautiful mix of orange and red, and the stars were starting to appear. I felt a sense of peace and tranquility. I knew that I was home, and I was happy to be there. I took a deep breath and stepped out of the car.

foot -- just as our evangelists go on to say that the crowds followed on foot. The entire Marcan account, as we would expect, is a good deal longer than that of Matthew or Luke. It alone gives such details as the necessity for "two hundred pennyworth of bread", that the grass was "green", and that they sat in ranks of hundreds and fifties. Other details are common to all three evangelists -- the specific number of loaves and fishes, the twelve baskets of salvage, and the number of those fed. Again we must emphasize that the form-critic should not let his reason remind him too strongly that such a miracle is "impossible", or that the number of people is excessive. From the standpoint of literary form, these accounts verify our trust in Mark as the earlier and more verisimilar version of the original form, reaching back to the period immediately following 30 A.D..

The feeding of four thousand in Mark 8.1-9 is a much simpler, shorter, and more general version of the same form. The details are less sharp, and the number fed has decreased, while the available food has slightly increased.¹ The amount of salvage is also reduced. Apparently this revised version of the traditional form also dates from an early period, for Mark's use of both versions shows that both held firm places in the tradition. He retains them, even at the risk of obvious repetition. The form of the tradition was fixed, and he treated it conservatively. He retained what

1. Seven loaves and a "few small fishes".

he had received from the earliest days, even though it gave his gospel the appearance of inconsistency. On such a point as this, Formgeschichte can demonstrate how the forms retained by Mark must have had definite historical value. They bring us into reliable contact with the historical Jesus.

p. In the story of Jesus walking on the water, Mark¹ alone makes the following comments: A. The disciples were "rowing"; yet he goes on to explain that they should have been sailing, and the rowing was necessary because "the wind was contrary unto them". B. There is a time detail; it was "about the fourth watch of the night". C. Mark agrees with Matthew in the statement that the rowers "supposed that it was an apparition". D. Mark records that "they all saw him". The experience was a group experience. To be sure, Matthew has an additional account of Peter attempting to walk on the water -- an account which certainly was not part of the original form. If Mark had known of any such thing, or if there was Petrine tradition back of his writing, he would surely have included the item. For his purposes the disgrace of Peter would have been less important than the ensuing glorification of Jesus. Perhaps it needs to be remembered in dealing with this item, as in the case of feeding the multitude, that our investigation seeks to demonstrate an early date and historical background for the gospel form, without attempting to solve the whole problem of miracle.

1. Mk. 6.47-56.

in the morning from the earliest dawn, when it is
 the most beautiful of landscapes. In the evening
 the sun, the moon, and the stars are all visible
 in the sky, and the air is so pure and clear
 that one can see the mountains of the distance
 as if they were within reach. The water is so
 calm and still that it is like a mirror, and
 the reflection of the sky and the land is so
 perfect that it is like a second world. The
 air is so fresh and sweet that it is like
 a perfume. The water is so clear and blue
 that it is like a sapphire. The mountains are
 so high and steep that they are like giants.
 The sky is so blue and clear that it is like
 a velvet. The stars are so bright and clear
 that they are like diamonds. The moon is so
 full and round that it is like a silver disk.
 The sun is so bright and hot that it is like
 a fire. The air is so pure and clear that it
 is like a crystal. The water is so calm and
 still that it is like a glass. The reflection
 of the sky and the land is so perfect that it
 is like a second world. The air is so fresh
 and sweet that it is like a perfume. The water
 is so clear and blue that it is like a sapphire.
 The mountains are so high and steep that they
 are like giants. The sky is so blue and clear
 that it is like a velvet. The stars are so
 bright and clear that they are like diamonds.
 The moon is so full and round that it is like
 a silver disk. The sun is so bright and hot
 that it is like a fire. The air is so pure
 and clear that it is like a crystal. The water
 is so calm and still that it is like a glass.
 The reflection of the sky and the land is so
 perfect that it is like a second world.

q. We have already mentioned the preservation of Aramaic words from the mouth of Jesus. In addition to the "Talitha Cumi" of Mk. 5.41, the following instances indicate that the actual Aramaic words found a place in the earliest setting of the gospel forms. A. "Corban", Mk. 7.11. B. "Ephphatha", Mk. 7.34. C. "Eloi, eloi, lama sabachthani", Mk. 15.34. D. "Raca", Mt. 5.22. E. "Abba", Mk. 14.36.

As we have already said, these traces cannot be explained on the basis that Greeks liked to be mystified, and enjoyed reading in their gospels a few words that sounded like Oriental magic. Rather, they indicate a very definite connection with the historical event itself -- a relation which was frozen into the form immediately after 30 A.D., and which was retained by Mark because he neither wished nor dared to change it. The community, it must be remembered, can be a harsh critic.

r. Mark 3.22, in connection with the Beelzebub accusation, says the accusers were "the scribes which came down from Jerusalem". More specific information could not be desired. Not only are the accusers identified as scribes, but we learn that they had come from the temple-city, perhaps for the purpose of investigating the inroads of the new teaching. Matthew shows a growing tendency to blame on the Pharisees all opposition to Jesus. His parallel passage¹ says the accusers belonged to this group. Luke, being later, is most indefinite of all, and lets the accusation come

1. Mt. 12.24.

from "the multitude".¹ Mark alone gives us a detail relative to the Jerusalem origin of the complainers.

s. In the story of the anointing at Bethany, Mark gives an exceedingly accurate description of the material used.² It was "ointment of spikenard, very costly". Matthew, true to his carelessness in reproducing the details of narrative forms, simply says "exceeding precious ointment". When certain disciples object to the unnecessary indulgence, Mark recounts their words, "for this ointment might have been sold for above three hundred pence". We lose sight of this detail of value when Matthew recounts merely that it "might have been sold for much".

It might be noted here, as in many of the cases already mentioned, that the Fourth Gospel not only supports the details preserved in Mark's form, but has other significant details as well. In the case now before us John says the woman was Mary, and that she anointed Jesus' feet. He also identifies the complainer as Judas, and characterizes him as a thief. He preserves the estimated value of the ointment at Mark's figure of three hundred pence. In another section of this paper we shall consider the whole relationship of John to the formgeschichtlich approach. His apparent vindication of Mark amounts to little, as he often changes forms which Mark appears to have guarded with jealous care.

1. Lk. 11.14-15.

2. Mk. 14.3-9 and parallels.

t. Before approaching the passion story, which can be treated as a unit, let us mention five bits of detail which stand out as characteristic of Luke alone. It is necessary to do this, lest we conclude that only Mark preserved verisimilar detail in the gospel forms, and that Matthew and Luke garbled the account. The latter is by no means true. While Matthew and Luke allowed the influence of frequent retelling to dull the edge of their detail, they also (and especially Luke) had recourse to material not found in Mark, which preserved detailed forms from the earliest period. Some of these were the following: A. Luke 10.38-42 shows a definite picture of the scene in the Bethany home, with the very human incident of Martha complaining that Mary let her do all the work while she entertained the company. There is no reason for preserving this item except that it constituted a traditional form-unit. The scene is not necessary to Luke's picture of Jesus at this point, nor is the Jesus-saying of sufficiently universal interest to account for the preservation of the story. The Jerusalem community had an early interest in the Bethany home and the events which had transpired there. Accordingly, this form-unit was preserved. It is just the sort of thing that a writer some fifty-five years afterward would be least likely to invent. The invention would have no purpose, either literary or historical. Form-history alone preserved the item. B. Luke 13.11 gives us interesting detail about "a woman which had a spirit of infirmity eighteen

years; and she was bowed together, and could in no wise lift herself up". Other less outstanding details might be mentioned, indicating that Luke 13.10-17 had a reliable form-history. C. The story of the lepers, Lk. 17.11-19, gives us the number as "ten", and notes that they "stood afar off". D. The visit to Zacchaeus, Lk. 19.1-10, includes interesting examples of non-theological detail in a story that might otherwise be said to have a theological motive. We learn that Zacchaeus "was little of stature", and that he "climbed up a sycamore tree to see him". It is beyond the realm of common sense to claim that such minute details of a man's appearance and action would be invented for theological or apologetic purposes. Far from being invented, the very retention of such items depended upon the fixity of the form and its adaptability for non-literary preservation. E. Luke 19.11 gives an interesting geographical note that "he was nigh unto Jerusalem" when he gave the parable of the minae.

These examples, though only a few of many that could be given, are sufficient to show that the laws of Formgeschichte did not operate up to the time of Mark and then suddenly cease. Nor did they operate in the case of Mark, and not in the case of Matthew, Luke, or other writers. In the single tradition material it is impossible to compare our present version with an earlier version, as we have done with the double and triple tradition. But the fact that it is single tradition ought to bespeak the purity of the form, for the material would have

been less bandied about and consequently less mutilated while still in the oral state. Our comparisons have shown that there were careless tongues in the period from 60 A.D. to 85 A.D. -- careless, that is, in the matter of dropping details. But up until 60 A.D. the forms must have been preserved on the lips or note-pads of actual eyewitnesses, and the chance of mutilation was much less than in the period from 60 A.D. to 85 A.D.. If a second generation retained the forms with jealous care, what must the original generation of eyewitnesses have done? When Mark wrote, there was undisputed historical evidence for every literary form-unit he put into his gospel.

u. Due to the universal acceptance of the passion story as a sort of super-unit from the literary standpoint, we shall consider it under one heading. If the passion story was the first common possession of Christians, and if (as Dibelius thinks) it was widely used for missionary purposes, it would certainly have obtained its fixed form almost from the date of the crucifixion. In that case we would expect to find here a maximum of verisimilar detail, together with a minimum of what might give the account an appearance of invention or falsification. Our expectation in this regard is liberally rewarded. It is on the passion story that Matthew and Luke least differ from Mark. That is, the passion story suffered least from the dulling effect of the second-generation influence already making itself felt in the time of Matthew and Luke. Even John, except in certain well known points,

retains essentially the earliest outline of the passion story.

Let us examine the synoptic evidence:

A. There is a geographical detail in the very first verse of the passion section, Mk. 11.1: "And when they drew nigh unto Jerusalem, unto Bethphage and Bethany, at the mount of Olives, he sendeth two of his disciples...." All three evangelists include this note, so it must have occupied a definite place in the accepted version.

B. Mark 11.15-19, the account of the cleansing of the temple, shows that even in the passion section Mark had the advantage of purer forms. Although Matthew preserves (21.12) the reference that Jesus "cast out them that sold and them that bought in the temple, and overthrew the tables of the money-changers, and the seats of them that sold the doves", only Mark continues with the very definite item that he "would not suffer that any man should carry a vessel through the temple".

C. Although the story of the withering fig tree constitutes somewhat of a break in the passion narrative, its presence at this point is agreed upon by Matthew and Mark (Mt. 20.18-22, Mk. 11.20-25). The older (Marcan) version relates that the fig tree was found withered the next morning. This is preferable from the standpoint of common sense. It appears that the original form consisted of Mk. 11.12-14, 20-23 (perhaps to 25). Nevertheless, the scene in the temple, Mk. 11.15-18, and the reference of verse 19, "And every evening he went forth out of the city",

fit so naturally into their places that they must have occupied their present relation to the fig tree story almost from the beginning. It is worth noting that Matthew's story about the immediate withering of the tree is exactly what we might expect as a result of passing years and a heightened interest in the importance of Jesus' miracles. The gossip had been at work, making the remarkable element even more remarkable. Although it is not the chief point of form criticism, we note with interest that those forms which bear greatest evidence of age and purity also have least quarrel with the so-called "common sense view" of the gospels. The gospel forms support history rather than challenge it.

D. Mark 12.13, in describing those who were sent to trap Jesus in his talk, speaks of "certain of the Pharisees and of the Herodians". Matthew 22.15 blames the Pharisees in particular, yet allows Herodians as accessories after the fact. In Luke the sharpness of tradition has been reduced to a blunt and meaningless "spies", Lk. 20.20.

E. Mark 12.41, as compared with Luke 21.1-4, is a much more verisimilar and detailed story of the widow's mites. A short unit at best, Mark alone notes that Jesus "sat down over against the treasury", and explains the actual value of two mites "which make a farthing". Mark alone recounts that "he called unto him his disciples" to hear the saying about the widow. Luke in no way signifies the hearers, if

any. Even such a short item shows the working of our rule, though it might be thought a four-verse unit would be preserved with complete accuracy of detail.

F. Mark 14.26 and Matthew 26.31 agree on the interesting note, "And when they had sung a hymn they went out unto the mount of Olives". Was this the paschal hymn? Formgeschichte has nothing to say on the point. The question is too minute. But Formgeschichte can definitely find in this notation the verisimilitude of an actual event.

G. Mark 14.30-31 (Mt. 26:31-35, Lk. 22.31-34); all three accounts include the prediction that Peter would "thrice" deny Jesus, but Mark alone says "before the cock crow twice". If this detail were in either Matthew or Luke it might easily be written in for the sake of parallelism. But of all three Mark is least inclined to garble his account for the sake of appearance. Moreover, he continues by saying of Peter, "But he spake exceeding vehemently, If I must die....". Matthew also has the account of Peter's pledge of loyalty, but lacks the verisimilitude of Mark's picture of the fiery Peter bursting into "exceedingly vehement" speech.

H. The scene in Gethsemane involves approximately the same details in all three accounts. However, these details are numerous and significant -- the name of the place, the instructions to the disciples, the prayer, the sleeping disciples, and the final recognition of betrayal at hand.

I. Mk. 14.51-52, the incident of the young man with the

linen cloth, contains only two verses, but seven words involving detail. This may be autobiography on the part of the writer. If not, it demonstrates that even a short bit of the passion story did not easily drop from the form.

J. Mark alone mentions that the false witnesses "agreed not together", Mk. 14.56. Again, on the matter of Jesus' supposed statement about destroying the temple, "not even so did their witness agree together", Mk. 14.59. Both references ring with the accuracy of an eyewitness behind the present form. Perhaps there is a bit of detail in verse 58 which explains why the testimony disagreed. Mark says, "We heard him say, I will destroy this temple that is made with hands, and in three days I will build another made without hands". Matthew 27.61 has no reference to the presence or absence of hands, and refers to the actual temple in Jerusalem. In the Marcan form the statement might be a figurative way of saying one does not need years of labor and many stones in order to make a holy place. It is altogether likely that this earlier form is correct. It is more in keeping with Jesus' manner of speech throughout the gospel, to say nothing of the unlikelihood that he made such obviously incriminating statements at a time when he knew the Jewish authorities would be looking for trouble. Conclusion: Mark records the original and true form of Jesus' statement, but Matthew records an equally true form based upon specific statements of a false witness or witnesses brought into the trial. As

Easton says,¹ this saying in verse 58 is one of those which the early Christians would probably have counted themselves lucky to be rid of. It gave them embarrassment rather than help, yet it was too well known to be denied or discarded. Apparently the tradition was in touch with the actual facts, and was careful not to discolor them.

K. In reply to the question about Messiahship, Mk. 14.62 reports, "And Jesus said, I am". The much disputed verb of Matthew 26.64 reports "Thou hast said", or "Thou sayest"--but verse 65 indicates that the high priest understood it as clear blasphemy. A formgeschichtlich approach here, as elsewhere, would show the priority and correctness of Mark's account. By the time of Matthew the "I am" had taken on a sort of mystical, ambiguous sense. Thus we are warranted in saying that Jesus acknowledged Messiahship, although that acknowledgement would have to be modified in accord with what Jesus thought Messiahship entailed.

L. The reference to Alexander and Rufus, Mark 15.21, is taken by many authorities to indicate that these two were well known to Mark's readers. It is not the kind of detail that tradition would preserve unless there were value in it, as these names have no significance to us apart from this one passage. We can view the detail as editorial addition, or as part of the tradition that came to Mark. If we make the latter choice, it is another indication of how the tradition clung tenaciously to details of even secondary importance.

1. Easton, CG, 173.

M. Mark alone has a note on Pilate's inquiry about the surprisingly rapid death of Jesus on the cross, Mk. 15.44-45. This was a unique event, out of harmony with the long and torturous period usually required for crucifixion. That Mark records it, and that it fits so well into the form of the unit about Joseph of Arimathaea, prove that the incident was historical.

In the passion narrative the details of time and place are more exact than anywhere else in the gospel, and may be regarded as substantially correct. The chief temporal notes in Mark are as follows: Mk. 11.12 "And on the morrow.."; Mk. 11.20 "And as they passed by in the morning..."; Mk. 14.1 "Now after two days was the feast of the passover..."; Mk. 14.12 "And on the first day of unleavened bread, when they sacrificed the passover...". Taken together, these clues allow a fairly accurate reconstruction of the last week. Although there might be some quarrel over the possible identification of Mark 11.20 with Mark 11.12, it is clear that Mark had a complete and accurate tradition on the subject, and that he reproduced that tradition in its complete form.

Very similar to the presence of detail is the description of scene. Surely it is possible, when dealing with non-literary documents, to distinguish between invention and the description by an eyewitness. As an example let us consider the scene in the Nazareth synagogue, recounted most fully in Luke 4.16-30. We shall use Luke's version rather

...the ... of the ...
...the ... of the ...
...the ... of the ...
...the ... of the ...
...the ... of the ...
...the ... of the ...

...the ... of the ...
...the ... of the ...
...the ... of the ...
...the ... of the ...
...the ... of the ...
...the ... of the ...

...the ... of the ...
...the ... of the ...
...the ... of the ...
...the ... of the ...
...the ... of the ...
...the ... of the ...

...the ... of the ...
...the ... of the ...
...the ... of the ...
...the ... of the ...
...the ... of the ...
...the ... of the ...

than Mark 6.1-6 or Matthew 13.54-58, because it includes the most discourse material. Note the following items of detail which tend to describe the scene and set the stage for the event: Lk. 4.16, "and he entered as his custom was, into the synagogue on the sabbath day, and stood up to read". We learn that the book of Isaiah was "delivered unto him" (vs. 17). We see him open the book, and hear the words as he reads, Then he "closed the book, and gave it back to the attendant, and sat down: and the eyes of all in the synagogue were fastened on him" (vs. 20). The listeners were amazed at his wisdom, but angered at his directness of speech. "And they were all filled with wrath....and they rose up and cast him forth out of the city, and led him unto the brow of the hill whereon their city was built, that they might throw him down headlong. But he passing through the midst of them went his way" (vss. 28-30). Now, one of two things is true of this passage -- either it is a work of consummate literary artifice or it is founded upon fact. The description of the scene is too clear to be accidental. Standing up to read and sitting down to speak may have been customary in the synagogue, but a religious community of unlettered people would not include that sort of thing in an invented scene. They would be more likely to take it for granted. Every feature of both narrative and discourse indicates an eyewitness back of the description in the oldest forms.

Like many other phases of form criticism, this one is liable to become highly subjective because of the hazy material sometimes involved. For example, when Jesus spoke of lighting a lamp, hiding it under a bushel, or under a bed, or putting it on a lampstand, are we justified in saying that these articles were present in the room where he was speaking? that it was an illustration drawn from the actual scene, and that he pointed to the lamp or the bed as he spoke? Such questions can never be answered, so we must stifle the temptation to carry the verisimilitude of scene into minute details. On the other hand, it is easy to become ridiculous in trying to show that a given scene is artificial. Bultmann does this in commenting on Mark 2.15-17. He writes: "The effort was made to introduce the traditional words of Jesus as completely as possible into scenes in his life, and in this case the setting of a meal seemed to be the most appropriate situation, since fellowship at table easily symbolized fellowship in general".¹ This is a rationalization. The critic's better judgment has been overcome by his effort to prove the scene artificial. As a matter of fact, the supper scene is just another case of vivid verisimilitude in the gospels. It is introduced neither by accident nor by conspiracy, but because the events actually happened under the circumstances mentioned. It is one of the rather rare cases in which place details clung tenaciously to the rest of the unit, bearing testimony to the historicity of the scene.

1. Bultmann, in Grant, FC, 43.

The formgeschichtlich approach is a consistent approach in all the foregoing cases. We have tried to avoid the subjective element. We have omitted a host of items which could have been included by even the slightest leniency. But in a matter of this kind it is better to be conservative.

If any of the non-passion narratives included as much detail as the passion story, Dibelius and Bultmann would brand them as fictitious products of a gossipy community. Why do these authorities propound the false rule that detail is an incorrect inflation of the gospel brought about by passing time, and in the same books recognize the most detailed part of the narrative as essentially sound? The answer is found in the skeptical mood with which they approach the whole subject. The passion details hold no theological terror, and are acceptable; but they will not accept a detailed account of a miracle. This is fundamentally unscientific. Properly applied, Formgeschichte establishes for almost the whole gospel a reputation for historical exactness hitherto enjoyed by the passion unit alone.

Dibelius rightly maintains that in the earliest days the passion story would be told more often than any other incident about Jesus. It was the theme of the missionary, and the starting point of Christian faith. Therefore we should expect, if we follow Dibelius' general thesis, that much telling would soon result in much pollution. The story would lose all accuracy if not all truth. Yet this is the one

part of the gospel account which is universally viewed as historically trustworthy. The supposed rule falls down completely when put into practice. The facts favor exactly the opposite view, namely, that material which was most often repeated stood the greatest chance of being preserved with its literary form unchanged and its accuracy of detail unimpeached. The three synoptists treat the passion story with great care, and even John shows considerable uniformity in the passion narratives. Thus it becomes the ideal illustration of our principle.

Lest there be accusation of insincerity, we must recognize that there are numerous cases in which the details of Matthew and Luke appear more accurate than those of Mark. Their number is comparatively few, and the situation can usually be accounted for in one or both of the following ways:

A. The detail may be an editorial addition, comment, or explanation. Such comments usually come at the conclusion of form-units, but there is no guarantee that this will be the case.

B. We must remember that Matthew and Luke would naturally have access to certain form-traditions which would not reach Mark, or to different versions of the same form. Details thus preserved, while the tradition has been forced to mother them for a longer period of time, may be just as accurate and just as primitive as similar material in Mark. Matthew and Luke would sometimes have details at hand in Palestine which might not be remembered by Mark in Rome.

Also, the personality of the compiler influences his choice of material. The compiler of Matthew was meticulous when rules of religion were concerned, and Luke was a true Greek in looking for a certain amount of philosophical consistency. After all, it is the form that counts, and literary form is a cumulative sort of thing. Two accounts having different details may be complementary rather than contradictory. Indeed, the critic would be hard pressed to find in the synoptic gospels any double or triple tradition wherein the contradictions are of sufficient weight to seriously challenge the historicity of the events narrated. The objections are all subjective or theological, and these the pure form-critic must put behind him. If applied to discourse material this principle ought to be viewed reasonably, as it is always possible for the interpreter to make a mountain out of a mole hill. In the matter of strict narrative, the interpreter is not so important.

Good examples of the explanatory details alluded to under (A) of the above paragraph are the following: A. Mark 15.16, "And the soldiers led him away within the court, which is the Praetorium". Mark alone identifies the court as the Praetorium. Why did he do this? In all probability it was an editorial explanation for the sake of his Roman audience, rather than a part of the original form. B. Mark 15.21 reads, "And they compel one passing by, Simon of Cyrene, coming from the country, the father of Alexander and Rufus, to go with

them, that he might bear his cross". It appears that Alexander and Rufus were known to Mark's readers, and he mentions them as identification for their father Simon.¹ It is hardly likely that Matthew and Luke would both have omitted this detail if it had been a definite part of the form.

Items that seem to represent a definite non-Marcian tradition include the following: A. Luke 23.4-16, the trial before Herod. This is a distinctly verisimilar account, even to the note regarding the ensuing friendship of Herod and Pilate. B. Matthew 27.19, the advice of Pilate's wife and the account of her dream; "And while he was sitting on the judgment-seat, his wife sent unto him, saying, Have thou nothing to do with that righteous man; for I have suffered many things this day in a dream because of him". This sentence has little to commend its historicity, yet nothing to condemn it. C. The same must be said of Pilate washing his hands, Matthew 27.24-26. It does not interrupt Matthew's orderly use of the formal passion story, yet it probably came to him through channels unknown to Mark. Certainly there would be no reason for Matthew to invent this sort of story.

Sometimes the entire form suffers from the inclusion of an item which is obviously exaggerated or out of place. This is especially true of narrative units involving numbers. In the story of the Gadarene demoniac, both Mark and Luke have essentially the same details, but Mark preserves the obviously

1. See page 280.

exaggerated story of two thousand swine rushing into the sea. Why did he do this? Probably because it came to him as part of the tradition and he hesitated to change it. Matthew and Luke were not so hesitant, and they modified the form to read "many swine". The form early included what we consider an exaggeration, but this fact ought not to militate against its historicity. Most people today, if asked to estimate the number in a congested herd of animals or a large group of people, will guess too high. If Mark had been inventing this story he would have made it sound more accurate. His preservation of the exaggeration stamps him as a historian who did not tamper with the form-characteristics of his sources.

Occasionally the unique character of Jesus' instructions is a strong argument for the validity of the tradition. For example, Jesus is reported to have instructed a prospective disciple to "let the dead bury their dead" and follow him. It should not be inferred from this that Jesus made a practice of forbidding sons to bury their fathers. This was a specific case, not a general program. It records a test case, in which the loyalty of a prospective disciple was jeopardized by his filial duty. Such items must be historical, for the rule given by Jesus is not general, nor is it consistent with the general import of Jesus' teachings. We cannot find any evidence that Jesus taught disrespect for the dead or opposed filial love. Granted, then, that the detail in this case is

specific and unique, it must also be granted historical. It would be hard to imagine this statement of Jesus as an invention of later tradition-builders. If they were building such a form-unit to order, they would have kept Jesus' words consistent with the contemporary attitude on filial responsibility. They would not have introduced this item as a typical example of first-century loyalty.

A similar incident is to be found in the story of the sending of the twelve, Mk. 6.7-13 (Lk. 9.1-6, Mt. 9.36-11.1).¹ The instructions given to the disciples are unusual, to say the least. It is in vain to argue that ancient teachers were in the habit of sending out disciples without money, clothing, or planned itinerary. This item is preserved because the instructions of Jesus were unique. Their plan of action was not to be highly organized or subsidized. They were to preach to those who would hear; to lodge with those who welcomed them. The unusual character of the instructions is our best evidence that the details were preserved correctly.

Since the gospels consist of first-century forms, we cannot expect them to have the mathematical accuracy of our day. Consequently, in recovering the historicity of an item containing figures, we must distinguish between round numbers and exact numbers. Throughout the Bible we find

1. Matthew includes parallels to Mk. 13.9, 11-19 and Lk. 21. 12-19, items which show some theological interest and are of little value for our purpose.

forty used as a round number for a rather long time. The Israelites ate manna forty years in the wilderness. In Noah's time it rained for forty days. Moses was on the mountain forty days. Jesus ascended after forty days, and his temptations covered forty days. These are obviously round numbers, used in just the way we would expect them to be used in oral forms of the first century. In the same way, three days means a short time in such references as the raising up of the temple or Jesus' prediction of resurrection. A good example of a definite figure, not a round number, is that of Mark 9.2, "And after six days Jesus taketh with him Peter, and James, and John, and bringeth them up into a high mountain...". If this had read three days, or eight days (a week, counting both Sabbaths), we might not take it too literally. But there is no explanation for the six day period, except as we recognize in it a record of the historical fact.

Occasionally Matthew or Luke gives a detail Mark omits. Examples: A. Mt. 26.15, "And they weighed unto him thirty pieces of silver", versus Mk. 14.11, "And they were glad, and promised to give him money". B. Lk. 6.10 recounts the command of Jesus, "Stretch forth thy right hand"; Mark, in the parallel passage, omits "right". C. Luke 22.41, "And he was parted from them about a stone's cast". D. Mt. 26.60, "But afterward came two...". Others could be added, but only by a very close search. So far as the narrative material is concerned,

such cases can be counted on the fingers. They bear little weight against the preponderance of opposing evidence. Their significance is practically nullified when we make allowance for material that came to Matthew and Luke through Q and other special sources. Such material, as we indicate elsewhere, was preserved in form-units dating back to the earliest period. Though mostly discourse, narrative details may also have been included.

The type of form influences the amount of detail one has a right to expect. In the sayings units, for example, there is barely enough descriptive setting to make intelligible the remarks of Jesus. It is for the saying that the narrative is preserved, not vice versa. In such a situation one would expect little detail in the narrative, and investigation will show that the expectation is fulfilled. Nor can we find many details in the sayings, for the sayings-forms always generalize the principle involved. Accordingly, it is quite natural that we find the sayings-units grouped according to theme rather than according to chronology. The first-century Christians preferred them that way. They were easier to remember. Indeed, such grouping would be an inevitable result of even the shortest period of oral tradition. Neither Formgeschichte nor any other type of study can honestly hope to reconstruct the chronological order of the sayings. That order, I might add, does not really matter. But Formgeschichte does offer

certain clues that lead us to believe the sayings were actually spoken by the historical Jesus.

In the dialogues we meet essentially the same situation. The characters exist for the sake of the words they speak. Therefore the characters are not clearly drawn. Their portraits are shady and without detail. The questioner is usually described in such terms as "a certain man", "a certain lawyer", "the multitude", "one out of the multitude", "those that were with him", "the twelve", "the disciples", "certain of the scribes and Pharisees", etc.. It is only natural that these terms are used, and their presence persuades the formgeschichtlich investigator of the extreme antiquity of the forms. If our evangelists had been manufacturing material, they would have given the characters vivid personalities. As good story tellers they would have added personal names, perhaps symbolic. Or, if the community had been at work on the oral tradition, these things would have been added. We are forced to one conclusion: The sayings and dialogues lack detail and character portrayal because those who first used them had no interest in such things. The supreme purpose of these forms was to reproduce certain sayings of Jesus, and everything else was purposely omitted or dropped as far as possible into the background. The community preserved these forms in their earliest versions. The utter lack of accrued detail is apparent.

What has been said about characters also applies to

1912

1913

1914

1915

1916

1917

1918

1919

1920

1921

1922

1923

1924

1925

1926

1927

1928

1929

1930

1931

1932

1933

1934

1935

1936

1937

geographical and temporal details in the dialogues and sayings-forms. The setting may be "in a certain place", "by the sea", "in a mountain", or "in that place". The chief temporal details are occasional mentions of morning or evening. Thus all the evidence points to the same conclusion, namely, that these forms never had much detail. It was neither necessary nor desirable. The form was intended to preserve the speech of Jesus, and was not cumbered by unnecessary weights.

It seems to me that the cumulative effect of this evidence justifies one in saying that, just as detail in the narratives indicates the origin of the forms in the period from 30 A.D. to 40 A.D., so the lack of such detail in dialogues and sayings-forms dates them back to the same period. The forms were different to begin with, and the contrast is preserved in our gospels. There was none of the inevitable leveling down to a common mediocrity which one expects when a community begins to work on oral information. That the material gained its characteristic forms early, and that these forms were suited to the nature of the particular items, was the guarantee of historical dependability. When we are told that "a certain man" asked a given question, we are justified in believing exactly what the form retained and nothing more, namely, that some man actually asked the question. We do not know his name; in fact, if he was a stranger of the multitude, we have no right

to demand that Jesus would inquire his name, much less that the evangelists or the Christian community would make it a matter of historical research.

Let us never forget that, as far as the sayings and discourses are concerned, historicity is merely a matter of whether or not Jesus actually said the thing credited to him. The settings for many sayings -- especially the great blocks of parables or the sermon on the mount -- are so vague that they do not come under consideration. There is a certain type of Biblical study which would argue that, because Matthew introduces certain material with a mountain setting and Luke with a setting on the plain, and because one has the material grouped while the other has it scattered, the material is all historically false. At this point Formgeschichte exercises a wholesome influence, reminding us that the real question of historicity hinges on the nature of the form-unit, its adaptability to the material it conveys, and the presence or absence of characteristics peculiar to that particular form. Formgeschichte not only corrects a false notion of what historicity is, especially in the case of sayings and dialogues, but it gives us the clue for investigating particular cases.

As a matter of fact, the questions asked of Jesus are types which he must have met frequently, perhaps daily, in the course of his teachings. Such questions as ceremonial cleanliness, payment of taxes to Rome, proper Sabbath

observance, and the importance of legalism, were on the tongue of every Jew in Palestine about this time. True to the rabbinic style, Jesus may have standardized many of his answers and given them several times in essentially the same form. In the case of Sabbath observance, indeed, we have actual accounts of a number of times when the essential motif was restated. It is not too much to assume that many of the form-units preserved in the gospel had already begun to have a form-history before the time of the crucifixion. Unfortunately these items cannot be segregated. If they could, their historicity would be assured in a most unique and unquestionable manner.

It is common for scholars to say that frequent mention of the Pharisees is evidence of one or both of the following things: A. Carelessness on the part of the reporter and unhistoricity of the report. B. A theological interest on the part of the reporter in discrediting the Pharisees and blaming them for the opposition to Jesus. Now, let us look at the forms themselves, and take an intelligent view of the "Pharisee" references. Every one knows that the Pharisees were the largest party in Palestinian Jewry at the time of Jesus. Every one knows, too, that they were the popular party, whose representatives would be most numerous in any public gathering. Only a picked group of intellectuals would have shown a majority of Sadducees. If there were questions from a crowd of listeners, or if there were disorder,

or if there arose some kind of a plot, in all probability a majority of those concerned would be Pharisees. The form is vindicated by the facts. The "Pharisee" references are not evidence of a mutilating hand or a theological predisposition, but blend into the argument that the gospel forms originated early, and accurately reproduced the historical scene.

2. The Gospel forms include those items which represent a normal psychological reaction to the action described or the saying recorded.

In another section of this thesis we have discussed the actual characteristics of the forms. Our present contention is that these characteristics possess remarkable verisimilitude in the light of normal psychology, and that the preservation of such characteristics in the form-units bespeaks their historical trustworthiness. Thoroughly to investigate this matter would require a volume of minute study -- but it would be so subjective as to lose most of its value. The best we can do is to consider two or three examples, with the hope that they will justify our confidence in the whole body of gospel material.

The miracle stories furnish our best illustration. Generally speaking, the following items are present in the normal miracle form of the New Testament: A. A statement of

need. B. An appeal of the needy person or his representative to Jesus for aid. C. The necessity for faith, and the presence or absence of sufficient faith. D. The miracle itself. E. The amazement of witnesses. F. An exhortation to secrecy. G. The result, instead of secrecy, is widespread publicity.

A miracle form such as the feeding of the multitude stands quite by itself, but the above items are normal to the stories of healing, representing seventy-five per cent of all the miracles recorded in the synoptics. Let us observe how these elements constitute the framework of the story of the paralytic, Mk. 2.1-12.

A. "They brought to him a man sick of the palsy, lying on a bed". B. The verbal appeal is here replaced by a description of the eagerness with which they sought Jesus' presence, even to breaking up the roof. C. "And Jesus seeing their faith, saith unto the sick of the palsy, Son, thy sins are forgiven". A discussion of sin follows. D. The actual healing, "I say unto thee, Arise, take up thy bed and go unto thy house. And he arose...".

E. "They were all amazed, and glorified God, saying, We never saw it on this fashion". It might be asked why items (F)

and (G) are missing from this form. The answer is, the cure was performed in a most public manner, and exhortation to secrecy would have been useless. Note carefully: If Mark had been inventing a form, or if he had been slavishly following a form-style in which the form was more important than the content, we would probably have those further items

even though obviously unnecessary. In this case, the absence of the last two items bespeaks the historicity of the incident. Mark preserved the form as it came to him, just as the eye-witnesses must have first related the events. It cannot be emphasized too often that *formgeschichte* is not a taskmaster, but a tool.

Apart from the miracle framework, we ought to note the verisimilitude of psychological development in the story itself. The house was crowded; the eagerness of the bearers and the invalid is self-evident; true to first-century theology, sickness and suffering are assumed to be a punishment for sin; the scribes, alert to their duties, are on the watch for signs of blasphemy; Jesus senses their objection, takes the occasion to speak about the relationship between sin and suffering, and demonstrates his power over sin; finally, the amazement of the observers is a natural reaction after such a demonstration. Although the story will not justify a microscopic examination (which would be subjective at best), the recorded evidence of human reactions forms a verisimilar account which reaches back to an eyewitness. Conclusion: If the account was not invented to satisfy a false sense of form, yet retains all the valid elements of the usual miracle form, and if the psychological progression of the elements making up the form is intelligible, *Formgeschichte* has made a definite demonstration in favor of the historicity of the story.

However, we dare not take the list of standard elements in the miracle stories too seriously, even though this has been part of the stock-in-trade of Formgeschichte. Hardly any miracle story embodies all the seven items listed above. The rule is proved by the exceptions, demonstrating that these items were among those most commonly expected in the miracle forms of the day.

As another example, let us consider the case of the Gadarene demoniac. The following elements constitute the story, Mk. 5.1-20: A. A description of the insane man, his dwelling, and the failure of former efforts to help him. B. The man, while he has not the customary element of faith, recognizes Jesus and worships him. He comes to Jesus, but there is the appeal of fear rather than of faith. C. The presence of the swine is woven into the narrative of the actual healing. D. The witnesses were amazed and frightened. E. There is no exhortation to secrecy -- rather, "Go to thy house unto thy friends, and tell them how great things the Lord hath done for thee... And he went his way, and began to publish...how great things Jesus had done for him: and all men did marvel". This story certainly does not follow any standard miracle form. Yet, like the case of the paralytic, it includes several of the items attributed to that supposed standard form. Much more interesting are the human touches. The swineherds are interested in the loss of their property rather than the recovery of the demented man. The friendless

victim desires to remain in the company of his benefactor, but the witnesses are afraid of Jesus' presence. The standard form exists only in the mind of the scholar, and is useful only in showing how the tradition adjusted contemporary literary methods to fit what was to them more important, namely, the facts of historical experience.

As a final example, the case of the demoniac boy, Mk. 9, 14-29, demonstrates normal human reactions just as well as literary form. The form elements are there, but it is obvious they did not dominate the tradition for their own sake. They merely afforded a convenient literary vehicle for the story. We see the excitement of the crowd "running to him", the renewed hope of the anxious father now that the "specialist" has arrived, and the disgust of Jesus at his disciples' failure (which he blames upon their lack of faith, consistent with the standard form). Then Jesus asks a question about the duration of the affliction, and mildly reproves the father for his continued hesitance. The father is exceedingly human. Anxious to help the doctor, he declares "I believe!", but then catches himself back to reality, and begs in the same breath "help thou mine unbelief". After the healing is completed, as if to protect trade secrets, the disciples wait for privacy before asking the cause of their failure. If any literary form embodies the element of psychological verisimilitude, this one does.

A similar example in the sayings-form is found in Mk. 9.33-50. In addition to the fact that this unit fulfills the definition of a standard sayings-form, the type of form itself marks the account as historical. How would tradition preserve a story of the disciples quarreling over rank? In a miracle form? No, the form simply would not fit the facts. In a dialogue? The personality of Jesus might easily be eclipsed by the disciples. In a pure narrative? it would be a literary impossibility, for narrative is suited to telling a story rather than illustrating a principle. On such a matter the word of Jesus was final and authoritative. The sayings-form was the only gospel form that would fit the case. Thus the form preserves in Mark 9.35 a statement of Jesus which strikes directly at the crux of the matter, "If any man would be first, he shall be last of all, and minister of all". The great number of sayings-units, as compared to other forms, indicates that Jesus' word on such questions constituted a major interest of the earliest tradition.

The question might be put this way: Why do we not have a splendid parable on the mote and beam? Why not a narrative description of the Kingdom of God? Why not a long sayings-unit on the importance of healing people, rather than miracle forms of actual healings? The answer ought to be self-evident. Certain forms fulfill certain needs, and the more natural that fulfillment seems to be in the gospel accounts, the greater the probability that history is accurately

reproduced for us. If Mark had been a literary inventor, writing for a miracle-loving generation, he could have replaced dozens of the sayings-forms with miracle forms. He could have omitted the sayings-form and emphasized the miracle form when the two are complementary parts of the same unit. When the non-canonical writers attempted to do exactly that thing, even the cleverest of them branded himself a liar. Their literature suffered accordingly. The would-be reviser has never been able to couch the gospel material in forms so appropriate as those actually retained by the eyewitnesses. Where historical accuracy gives way to a measure of the poetic (as in the birth stories), the form adapts itself to that purpose. When the object is to present temptation in the light of Old Testament religion, the form accomodates itself to the need. An investigation of the entire synoptic account will fail to disclose a single case where the form definitely does not fit the historical material involved. This is a result neither of chance nor of an inventor's magic. It is a result of the fact that history is accurately reproduced in the gospel form-units.

3. Comparative length of the form-units in the synoptic gospels.

In the following table will be found comparisons of the amount of narrative material given by the synoptists on

various subjects. In this list is every major piece of narrative material -- that is, form-units in which the narrative is more prominent than the discourse or dialogue forms. In cases where it is obvious that Matthew or Luke had discourse material from Q (or some other source), this discourse material has been deleted. In other words, we seek to compare the actual extent of the narrative material in Mark and Matthew-Luke, in order to verify our contention that Mark represents the earlier, longer, more accurate version of the primitive forms, while Matthew and Luke represent a conflation of Mark rather than an inflation, so far as narrative material is concerned. It is obvious that such a study can be based only on material of the double or triple tradition, even though one gospel may have additional single tradition material on the same subject. Where discourse material has been deleted, the fact is clearly indicated. Where a comparison of the number of verses does not give a fair comparison of the actual length of the passage (due to variation in verse length), that also is indicated.

NARRATIVE ITEM	EXTENT OF THE MATERIAL IN VERSES		
	<u>Matthew</u>	<u>Mark</u>	<u>Luke</u>
Ministry of John	6	8	9
Baptism of Jesus	5	3	2
Temptation of Jesus	11	2	13
Nazareth rejection	5	6	4*
Call of the four	5	5	0*

* Plus single tradition material not subject to comparison.

The first of these is the fact that the
 number of cases of the disease has
 increased in the last few years. This
 is due to the fact that the disease
 is now more common in the tropics
 and is also more common in the
 temperate zone. The second fact is
 that the disease is now more common
 in the tropics and is also more
 common in the temperate zone. The
 third fact is that the disease is
 now more common in the tropics and
 is also more common in the temperate
 zone. The fourth fact is that the
 disease is now more common in the
 tropics and is also more common in
 the temperate zone. The fifth fact
 is that the disease is now more
 common in the tropics and is also
 more common in the temperate zone.

Name of the disease	Number of cases	Year	Place
Malaria	10	1910	India
Typhoid	5	1911	China
Dysentery	15	1912	Japan
Cholera	20	1913	Russia
Scarlet fever	12	1914	Australia
Whooping cough	8	1915	Canada

Unclean spirit cast out at Capernaem synagogue	0	8	7
Peter's mother-in-law	2	3	2
Evening cures at Capernaem	2	3	2
Leper cleansed (Mk. 4)	4	6	5
The paralytic	7	12	10
Call of Matthew	5	5(longest)	6
Plucking grain	8*	6	5
Man with withered hand	6(shortest)	6	6(longest)
Stilling the tempest	5	7	4
Gadarene demoniac	7	20	14
Jairus' daughter and the woman with an issue of blood	9	22	17
Death of John	12	16*	3
Feeding five thousand	11	17	8
Walking on the water; a visit to Gennesaret	9**	10	0
Syrophoenician woman	8	7(equals Mt.)	0
Feeding four thousand	7	9	0
Transfiguration	13	12(longest)	9
Demoniac boy	7	16	7
Blessing children	3	4	3
Blind men at Jericho	6	7(longest)	9
Anointing at Bethany	8	7(longer)	0
Triumphal entry	11	11	10***

* Including some single tradition, integral to the form-unit.

** Plus single tradition of Peter's attempt.

*** Plus single tradition material not subject to comparison.

Fig tree incident	5	9(two items)	0
Widow's mites	0	4(longer)	4
Judas' conspiracy	3	2(equals Mt.)	4
Passover preparation	4	6(equals Lk.)	7
Gethsemane*	11	11	8
Trial before the council, and Peter's denial	19	20	13**
Jesus Mocked by soldiers	4(longer)	4	0
Golgotha	6	6	2
Death scene and testimony of centurion	9***	9	6
Burial	5	6(longest)	7
Resurrection morning	10	11	10***

Although it is often difficult to separate the narrative element from single tradition discourse, we have made the distinction very carefully. The above table deals only with written material, yet we can derive from it the laws which reached farther back into the oral period. This is the only way we can formulate such laws, and it is a standard method of Formgeschichte.

An analysis of the above material gives us the following startling conclusion: Although we commonly think of Mark as the shortest gospel, out of the thirty-eight chief narrative form-units, the Marcan account is longer than either Matthew's

* Not including betrayal, which is largely discourse.

** Plus single tradition; the relation of Lk. 22.66-71 to this item is a matter of doubt.

*** Plus single tradition material not subject to comparison.

or Luke's in twenty-five cases. In six cases, one or both of the other evangelists equals Mark in length. In only seven cases is the conclusion unfavorable to Mark. Out of these, six show a difference of only a few words. In the seventh, the story of the temptation, there is reason to believe that Matthew and Luke used material not available to Mark. Note the nature of these cases: A. The ministry of John. B. The baptism of Jesus. C. The temptation of Jesus. D. Plucking grain. E. The man with the withered hand. F. The conspiracy of Judas. G. Jesus mocked by the soldiers. The first item has no bearing on the subject of our thesis. The second, third, sixth, and seventh are either poetic forms or traditions of little importance to our thesis. Only the fourth and fifth cases are really vital. In the former, Matthew exceeds Mark by only thirty-seven words; in the latter, by exactly sixteen words (American Standard Version).

It would seem that this is a clinching argument, so far as the narrative material is concerned. It is a genuine *formgeschichtlich* argument, for if length is not a characteristic of literary form, then there are no characteristics. So this section concludes as it opened, with the contention that Mark's narrative of the life of Jesus is actually the longest of the synoptic accounts, and that it reproduces form-material which roots back into the period from 30 A.D. to 40 A.D.. It gives liberal evidence of historical accuracy, and is based upon the accounts of eyewitnesses.

The matter of discourse material is another question, because of the influence of Q and possible other sources. But even here, so far as we can analyze the elements which constitute literary verisimilitude, there is every reason to have confidence in the fundamental historicity of the synoptic account -- in spite of the fact that we may doubt certain chronological sequences and regret the compiler's habit of blocking his materials.

4. Summary of the evidence on verisimilitude.

We are now able to draw the following conclusions from our investigation in this section:

a. The narrative elements of the gospel forms contain a surprising amount of verisimilar detail, reaching directly back to eyewitnesses or unknown sources of equal reliability.¹ The frequent accusation that the gospels are lacking in detail has no basis when viewed in the light of first-century religion. It was customary to generalize religious principles whenever possible. Indeed, the details are more numerous than we might expect.

b. The sayings-forms and dialogue forms by nature required little narrative detail, and the absence thereof

1. In this the self-censorship of the Christian community was an important factor. Passing time in no way destroyed the historicity of the synoptic form-units.

should not militate against their historical trustworthiness. Most of the sayings are answers to questions which would be met again and again, while the dialogues are important as reproducing a Jesus-principle rather than for character portrayal. This lack of character portrayal is not a valid argument against historicity.

c. Historicity of the sayings and dialogues depends not upon an accurate narrative setting, but upon the larger question of verisimilitude in the literary forms. From this standpoint the discourse units gain our increased confidence, and we recognize that the compiler was wise in grouping like forms together. Historicity is established when we show that Jesus made the statements credited to him. We need not reproduce the whole scene or seek out chronological positions for stray sentences.

d. The miracle forms contain a liberal amount of detail, which indicates that the form adhered closely to historical facts. This is especially true of the miracles of healing.

e. The narrative forms are characterized by great variety, ranging from poetic stories about shepherds to the chronological account of Jesus' passion and death. In all cases, the analysis of literary form gives us a valid clue to the historical fact, and form-analysis should precede content-analysis. The latter is too readily influenced by prejudice and subjectivity.

f. The connective material not included in form-units is of comparatively small extent and even smaller importance. It may clearly disclose the hand of the editorial compiler, or it may blend so well with the form-units as to be undistinguishable. In either event it has a surprising chance of accuracy, for these connective portions are almost invariably couched in the most general terms, with comparatively few details that can be challenged. Thus Formgeschichte demonstrates the historicity of the gospel form-units, but is not greatly concerned with minute questions of chronology.

g. It has been conclusively demonstrated that Matthew and Luke, being later, have less detail than Mark. Applying the rule of Formgeschichte thus derived, we conclude that Mark represents a conflation of eyewitnesses' accounts, rather than an inflation. The Marcan detail is so unique and verisimilar, however, that it must date back to definite eyewitnesses or equally authoritative origins. Hence, Mark preserves form-traditions which probably originated in the period from 30 A.D. to 40 A.D., and represents a contraction rather than a gossipy expansion of facts. The reasons Matthew and Luke falsely appear to have a superfluity of detail are: A. They had access to reliable information in Q and other non-Markan traditions, embodying forms which are undistinguishable from those of Mark. They had a historian's right to use this material. B. Matthew indulges his habit of quoting the Old Testament freely, but these editorial additions

can be easily recognized. C. In rare cases the wording is longer than in Mark, though no details are added. This is a second-generation influence. D. The supposed contrast is really due to additional discourse material, for which the non-Markan units contained in Q were largely responsible.

h. All the evidence of verisimilitude, and the glimpses of normal psychological reactions in the gospels, tend to further augment the formgeschichtlich verification of the historicity of Jesus as pictured in these accounts.

i. The narrative form-units in Mark represent an earlier and longer version of the primitive forms than do the corresponding units in Matthew-Luke. The latter do not inflate Mark's material by adding false elements. Rather, they tend toward conflation in their efforts to keep the tradition pure.

B. The ipsissima verba and the ipsissimus spiritus as complementary aspects of historical reliability in the gospel material. There is no history without interpretation. Our gospels have the form of reminiscences, not inventions.

It has become a common saying among form-critics that, in view of the multiplicity of the forms and the lack of any universal agreement about their classification, it is altogether impossible to recover the ipsissima verba of Jesus. The differences in regard to classification would lead an already

skeptical person to this opinion. The error grows out of an overemphasis upon the classification of the gospel forms. It is this error to which Bultmann falls victim.

As a matter of fact, classification of the material is the least important part of Formgeschichte. To be sure, it has customarily been the starting point. But we have listed the forms in the simplest possible way, in order to demonstrate that there are more significant elements in Formgeschichte than the mechanical identification of certain debatable characteristics.

Is it possible, then, to recover the ipsissima verba of Jesus? In many cases, yes. We can recover the actual words to the satisfaction of faith. But we can never recover them to the satisfaction of skeptics. There is always room for a doubt, and we would do well to recognize it. The form-critic is therefore put in the universal position of modern Biblical critics: He can bring evidence of great weight, sufficient to satisfy any but the most rabid soul, yet he dares not claim to establish the historicity of any particular words of the New Testament record. What attitude shall we take in this dilemma?

In the first place, we must seek a more intelligent view of the entire field of gospel history. We are dealing with material which dates from the first century, and which describes events taking place in that century. This very fact gives the material, in the eyes of certain would-be

critics, doubtful historicity. Could anything dependable come out of the first century? Is it not absurd to presume that words or events would be recorded with any accuracy in that far-off age? The feebleness of such arguments is almost self-evident. The student of architecture is sometimes inclined to scoff at the work of generations not acquainted with steam shovels and structural steel. A good cure for that attitude is to visit the Roman remains at Ammon or Baalbek -- an experience certain to send the critic away humbled. In the same way, the best cure for critics who will allow no literary intelligence in the first century is a thorough exposure to the New Testament itself.

We also need exposure to the conditions which prevailed in the literary world of the first century. There is a widespread tendency to assume that, because some of the first followers of Jesus were engaged in such simple trades as fishing, the entire group consisted of ignoramuses. This is a mistake. B. L. Woolf writes, "The average man in the Greek East about 25-30 A.D. found himself well supplied with literature -- ancient, mediaeval, and modern".¹ Again, "It is probably not too much to say that everyone in the Greek East could read, and that the majority could write".² This statement is probably an exaggeration, but it is also a wholesome corrective. The very crudities of the Egyptian

1. Woolf, BBGS, 121.

2. Woolf, BBGS, 112.

papyri indicate that they were not the work of trained literary men, but of common tradesmen and artisans. In Asia Minor and Palestine the Greek culture was more real than we can imagine. Even Nazareth, small and despised, was only five miles south of the new city Sepphoris, a seat of Roman and Greek culture. Not far away was Tiberias, and many other Greek towns were scattered around the Sea of Galilee, especially its southern shore. These communities had more or less access to the treasures of Greek literature -- not merely from the classical period, but also from the great number of contemporary writers. Of the latter the names of over one thousand are still known to literary history -- writers whose works must have received more or less general circulation and were available to any reader who had time, money, or inclination. For the Jew there was a wide selection of works by Jewish or Graeco-Jewish writers. "Many Jews, both in the homeland and abroad, must have been quite as familiar with the current general literature as is the case today".¹ There was a wealth of material available for the average person -- material more closely related to his life than that of the Greek classical period. Again, Woolf's statement may be a bit extreme, but serves as a good corrective to our usual view. "All sorts of new forms appeared, most of which were moulded with an eye to popular

1. Woolf, BBGS, 121.

taste. We have biographies full of personal detail often of a scandalous character; imaginary letters attributed to the great men of the past; numerous histories, some written in a melodramatic style; informal collections of strange happenings or experiences, like ancient versions of a modern 'Believe it or not'; books on foreign travel, romances, 'diatribes' as the open-air speeches were called which were delivered by peripatetic philosophers, public teachers or orators; books of witty and wise sayings culled from the writings or the traditions of well-known men; song books for soldiers and strolling actors; pseud-epigraphic prophecies or 'apocalypses'; poetry, satiric or amorous and often licentious; philosophy, science of all sorts; literary criticism, and what not else".¹ In other words, the literature of the Greek East, whether in the Greek or Hebrew language, was comparatively inclusive. It had certain limitations, of course, such as the lack of humorous verse, and the dominantly gloomy mood.

From this brief survey we may conclude that the gospel writers were certainly not bound by any narrow notions about what constituted literature. The writings of their own time were sufficiently diverse to guard against such a danger. Neither was there any one literary form so prevalent that the gospels would have to follow it in order to become "good literature". Such was neither the historical background nor

1. Woolf, BBGS, 122.

the attitude of the evangelists. There was no one form which they were obliged to follow, and our pursuit of parallel forms in Greek and Jewish literature is often unfruitful. Only in so far as the gospel forms follow certain well defined lines of Jewish pedagogy and are suited to memorization, is such comparison really valuable. We are struck by the fact that the gospels are a collection of unique literary forms, finding a place in the midst of contemporary literature, yet standing apart from it and not sharing its gloomy and often licentious aspects. The gospels are lucid, clear-cut, and largely optimistic. Formgeschichte naturally invites comparison, especially with the Jewish poetic style and the Greek apothegms, but its most fruitful field is the investigation of New Testament literary forms for their own sake. Popular traditions show themselves in Q, and the work of the trained literary man in Luke. Mark and Matthew both have their well-known characteristics. The study of the gospel forms never requires us to degrade our literary standards, and the notion that they grew out of the lower dregs of ancient humanity is absolutely unfounded. Unwritten tradition is involved, but those who founded the tradition lived in a time and place which made them neither fools nor cowards. The streams of Jewish inheritance, plus the infiltrations of Greek culture, provided an ideal background upon which to reflect a religious discipline without losing its unique historical significance.

If approached in the attitude of fairness, the literature of the New Testament will win its own way, not by a mass of minute evidence establishing the authenticity of every word (for centuries that authenticity was not doubted by general readers, and there was no need to establish it), but rather by presenting a view of Jesus and early Christianity which is marked by a superb unity of thought, feeling, and expression. One spirit dominates the whole New Testament, and especially the synoptic gospels.

Consider, for example, the story of Jesus. As Dodd has reconstructed the kerygma (primitive preaching) from Acts and Paul, it includes approximately the following items: Jesus fulfilled prophecy; the new age has come; he was born of the seed of David; he lived a life of piety and vigor, announcing the need for salvation and repentance; he was put to death according to the scriptures, was buried, and on the third day arose according to the scriptures; he was then exalted to the right hand of God, as Son of God and Lord of all; he sent his Holy Spirit upon the church, filling it with new vigor; he will come again as Judge and Savior. This, in outline, is a combination of elements represented in the characteristic speeches of Acts and the writings of Paul. It is evident to the most casual observer that the speeches in Acts follow essentially the same pattern. It is this pattern which gives rise to the analysis of the kerygma. That is, the presence

of these elements in all the speeches proves that they were part of the framework of early preaching about Jesus. The significant point is this: The kerygma thus derived can be placed directly upon the gospels, and will fit them perfectly. The gospel compilers did not in any way change the general outline of the life and work of Jesus which tradition had preserved even from the days of Pentecost, and which Paul had preached all over Asia Minor and in Rome. Even John follows the general outline of the synoptics, and accordingly of the kerygma.

Our reasoning follows this line: The epistles of the New Testament, being the earliest documents to reach their present form, presuppose a certain definite tradition; the addresses of Acts have a common outline, which agrees with the tradition as presupposed by the epistles; therefore the late evidence of Acts is not at fault, but follows the line of earliest tradition; also, the kerygma in Acts shows strong Aramaic touches. Leaving the gospels aside for a moment, we can find the early Christian tradition consistently presented in the remainder of the New Testament. The gospels, when superimposed upon this tradition, do not contradict it. Rather, they enrich it by adding details. "The gospels are to be regarded primarily as the deposit, or crystalization, of this tradition in narrative form".¹ Both the elements of preaching and of teaching are included, being

1. Dodd, HG, 74.

broadly typified by Q and Mark. Professor Dodd even adds: "Acts 10.36-43 might serve well as an outline of the gospel according to Mark" -- indeed, for all four of the gospels. The gospel story "lies within a framework which can be traced to the earliest days of Christianity... A true historical perspective suggests that it would be nearer the truth to say that the kerygma, or the facts and beliefs involved in it, created the community, than to say that the community created the kerygma."¹ Thus it can be demonstrated that, in the broad sense, the gospels follow the very earliest tradition so far as the framework of the material is concerned. Leaving aside for the moment the question of ipsissima verba, the uniformity of the evidence testifies to the preservation of the ipsissimus spiritus of Jesus since the very earliest period.²

In commenting on the false sense of historical criticism which motivates Bultmann and others in their demand for the ipsissima verba or nothing, Barton says, "It is the product of temperaments that are so skeptical about everything in the Bible that they demand of it standards of certainty that would not be required in any other book".³ If these same standards were applied to the books of the critics themselves, they

1. Dodd, HG, 77.

2. Note that we here use the term "kerygma" and accept part of Dodd's findings, without committing ourselves to the entire theory he has built up around the term. We shall later show the faults of that theory, although the fundamental concept of kerygma is valuable.

3. Barton, AA, 4.

would soon be thrown out of court. Their writings are so full of subjective opinion that their conclusions bear little weight. Fascher has nicely expressed the point thus: "If it must look like a legal formula or the registration of evidence which catalogues with exaggerated precision every trivial detail, there is no historical account in the entire New Testament, or indeed in most of our other historical sources. But if we are of the opinion that a report is historical which records that which is essential, we shall recognize many of them".¹ It is the aim of history not to recover bare facts, but to recover facts in conjunction with their most reasonable interpretation.

There is no such thing as history without interpretation, any more than there is literary form without content. To become a historical event, an occurrence must have meaning. Professor Dodd has illustrated this by comparing the court evidence in an automobile accident with the letter written by a young man telling how he has fallen in love. In the latter case, the narration of bare facts would never carry a proper interpretation of the importance of the historical situation. Therefore the gospels, too, must be viewed as justifiably including interpretation on the historical plane. The passion story, certainly our oldest portion of the narrative, would scarcely merit consideration if, like Tacitus, it merely narrated that a certain religious teacher had been

1. Fascher, FM, 105, translated by Taylor, FGT, 85.

put to death. The passion narrative becomes significant as it breathes the universal spirit of the teacher and of his disciples. The very fact that those disciples found the events worth narrating and interpreting is one of our surest testimonies to the trustworthiness of the tradition. Certain critics have argued that our records are late and untrustworthy because in that age paper and ink were scarce. There is no truth in such a statement (witness Paul's freedom in writing). If there were, it would be this: Our New Testament writers found these facts of such supreme significance that they felt any material sacrifice desirable in order to preserve them. They would not waste precious materials in recording an invention of gossiping neighbors, with no traditional authenticity.

Thus, according to the intelligent view, history rightly consists of a combination of recorded facts and their interpretation. It is this recognition which makes *Formgeschichte* a real advance in the historical approach to the gospel. Setting aside an overemphasis on Q, which has been characteristic of many writers, and even setting aside the tendency to make Peter the responsible witness for what Mark recounts, *Formgeschichte* plunges directly into the living material. The material is contemporary with the Christian movement itself, and the two ought not to be separated in the eyes of historians. More important still, *Formgeschichte* takes us back into what might be designated the "twilight

period", making vivid the influence of life and worship upon the historical tradition. If there is any one thing Formgeschichte teaches, it is the fact that the material about Jesus was used—incessantly and enthusiastically. As to whether it was used in purely oral forms is another question.

The final test of the spiritus of the gospels lies in a comparison of the material itself with the events that it narrates. "...The ultimate reason for regarding a narrative as historical is its consistency with the circumstances of the events which it narrates".¹ There is drama in the picture of Jesus announcing the Kingdom, sending out disciples to hasten the work one man was insufficient to do, or saying to his disciples "Come ye yourselves apart into a desert place, and rest a while".² Regardless of our view of the earliest Christian community, there is something realistic in the story of the transfiguration, Jesus' determination to go to Jerusalem even in the face of death, his despair over Jerusalem, and his courage in facing the cross. Perhaps Mark was not primarily interested in writing history for its own sake. "But when an historical narrative produces psychological drama of this kind unconsciously, it must almost necessarily be because the narrative is very close to the events, in other words because it is based on real reminiscences".³

1. Burkitt, JC, 66.

2. Mk. 6.31.

3. Burkitt, JC, 67.

After allowance has been made for errors in the preservation of tradition and for the possible exaggerations of missionaries, and after we have frankly recognized the fact that men of the first century trusted miracles more than we do, there is still a sense of reality and truthfulness about the gospel accounts. We shall offer specific examples to show why this is true, but our present interest is more in the matter of attitude or point of view. Burkitt has expressed it thus: "(But) when all these obvious considerations are allowed for, there remains a difference of quality between the eyewitness's reminiscences and the historian's constructions. And the great merit of the tale told in Mark is that so much of it seems to be of the nature of reminiscences, even if it be reminiscence at second or third hand".¹ As to whether these reminiscences are personal, and came to Mark through Peter, or whether they are reminiscences of the community, there is an open question. So far as Formgeschichte is concerned, it does not really make much difference. What forms would Peter have used in his preaching if not those which were characteristic of the gospel and his own age? How would it be possible to distinguish between the forms Peter would have used, and those that any other Christian preacher would have employed under the same circumstances? Knowing as little as we do about the personal habits and methods of the early Christian preachers, we cannot purport

1. Burkitt, JC, 67.

to distinguish the literary forms of one from those of another. It is impossible at this stage to distinguish what Peter may have personally remembered or what the community as a whole preserved through tradition, so far as the methods of Formgeschichte are concerned. This very fact testifies to the general historicity of the material. If Peter furnished Mark with much of his material, we ought to have no difficulty in separating such authentic material from spurious stories invented by the "community". In actual practice such a separation is impossible. There is a likeness about the forms, and a sort of common denominator about the spirit of the gospel records, which even the unpracticed eye can notice. They breathe the same spirit, and they all assume that this spirit is authentic.

Thus it is clear that the gospels are more than folk-tales. It ought never to be assumed that Formgeschichte regards them as folk-tales, merely because parallel forms can be found among the latter. As a matter of fact, such parallels are more interesting than instructive. Folk-tales almost invariably aim at the picturesque for its own sake, and have a certain looseness of context which is not characteristic of the gospels. Whether remembered by Peter or used freely in public assemblies, the gospel forms have a fixity about them that is far from the mere folk-tale. (It is Burkitt's view that this fixity indicates personal reminiscences on the part of Mark and Peter, so far as Mark's

gospel is concerned.) This fixity is a matter of literary form, rather than of content. In regard to content the gospels are far more fluid than, for example, the epistles of Paul. The latter, in comparison to the gospels, sometimes sounds like an Apostles' Creed. There are references to Jesus as son of God, first-born of creation, and descendent of David; we read of his descent to earth and birth of a woman, his human condition, crucifixion, resurrection on the third day, appearance alive to apostles, his present glory with God, and his future office as judge. Now, all these items can be duplicated more or less in the gospels, but there is a difference in the structure of the material itself. The gospels lack the creedal aspect of the epistles, retaining instead a simple account of the life and teachings of Jesus himself. If it can be assumed that the New Testament epistles (of Paul and others) were truly representative of thought in the early Christian communities, then it may also be said that the simple biographical forms of the gospels are not the kind of literature which the tastes of the early Christian community would tend to artificially produce.

This comparison takes on even sterner significance when we remember the early date of the Pauline letters. Why do the Paulines say so little about the life of Jesus beyond the bare kerygma? The question is still unanswered. Surely Paul knew much more than this; he must have had intimate knowledge of the life of Jesus. To be sure, many of the

epistles deal with topics which would require no such information. But comparisons would lead us to conclude that the gospels represent forms which even in 50 A.D. were beginning to be "old", and which had been definitely formulated almost from the very lifetime of Jesus. Perhaps they were so well known that Paul had no need in the letters to go beyond the kerygma. One thing at least appears evident: If the remainder of the New Testament can be taken into account at all, we must conclude that the simplicity and unity of spirit in the gospels demonstrates their unique and authentic origin. This uniqueness is not a product of the church or Christian community. In some ways it was almost foreign to it. It was a product of Jesus himself, and the impression he made upon actual hearers and eyewitnesses.

Some would say that such a conclusion is lacking in historical method. But any such accusation itself lacks a most important element of the historical method, namely, the ability to place the material in its own time and its proper setting. In replying to such skepticism Burkitt says, "The only answer to such a conviction (or prejudice) is to try and set it (i.e., the Biblical material) forth in modern style more or less as it stands, and then see whether, after all, it does not hang together by an inner rationality, as real history really does hang together."¹ In view of the years of Peter's preaching or the years of oral tradition

1. Burkitt, JC, 84.

which stand between the events and the written record, the wonder is that the whole thing is so fresh and so primitive. Indeed, Professor Dodd has said that Formgeschichte shows how uniformly the gospel materials in their relation to Christian tradition are not only central but primitive (i.e., early).

If we were to note all the instances in which this primitive character is evident, we would copy the gospels. Examples will suffice, since a slightly different phase of the question has already been treated under the title of verisimilitude.

Let us consider first of all the passion story. If it is admitted to be early, we should expect to find in it an unusual measure of freshness and virility. In this we are not disappointed. The material is replete with human interest. We see the disciples asleep, the young man losing his garment, and the confusion of the arrest. The attitude of the disciples combines both anger and fear. The last supper, regardless of whether it was the Paschal meal, was an event of supreme importance to the disciples. We are reminded that the multitude came with swords and staves, and that the mark of identification was a kiss. The story of Peter's denial, his vehement and profane attitude, and his consequent chagrin, all ring with the sense of reality.

To take a somewhat different example, Burkitt has pointed out that Mark 7.31 sounds like a rather round-about path for Jesus to follow: "And again he went out from the

borders of Tyre, and came through Sidon unto the sea of Galilee, through the midst of the borders of Decapolis". Matthew appears to avoid the geographical confusion by merely saying he "departed hence". Burkitt endeavors to show that Jesus' most natural route from the Tyre district, if he wished to avoid the communities in Galilee where he had previously been rejected, would be to take the ancient road eastward, passing just north of Sidon, thence southeast to Paneas and the Decapolis region. Instead of geographical confusion, as it first seemed, this verse becomes a definite and exceedingly clear-cut account of just what happened.

The number of such illustrations could be multiplied. Many of them have already been given in the sections dealing with detail and verisimilitude.

The notable unity of spirit existing among the gospels has been a subject of wonder to all but the most skeptical readers. Perhaps Hippolytus, Bishop of Rome, was the first to record his views on the subject. About the end of the second century he wrote as follows: "Although various principles are taught in the several Gospel-books, this makes no difference to the faith of believers, since by one governing spirit in them all, these facts are declared concerning the Nativity, the Passion, the Resurrection, His converse with the disciples, and His two advents, the first which was in humility of aspect, according to the power of His royal Father, and the glorious one which is yet to come". This statement represents the

... of the ... and ...

... the ... of the ...

... the ... of the ...

... the ... of the ...

... the ... of the ...

... the ... of the ...

... the ... of the ...

... the ... of the ...

... the ... of the ...

... the ... of the ...

... the ... of the ...

... the ... of the ...

... the ... of the ...

... the ... of the ...

... the ... of the ...

... the ... of the ...

... the ... of the ...

... the ... of the ...

... the ... of the ...

... the ... of the ...

... the ... of the ...

... the ... of the ...

... the ... of the ...

... the ... of the ...

... the ... of the ...

conviction that our gospels actually recounted the facts about Jesus, his life, and his purpose. These facts were authoritative for the church. Hippolytus all but reproduces in his own words the material of the kerygma. This was the heart of the gospels, regardless of apparent variations in the development of the material. The unity of the gospels is primary -- their diversity is secondary. Our primary task is not one of synthesis, for that would suggest that we seek to unite elements that were originally unrelated. "But in the New Testament the unity is original".¹

Equally striking is the directness and force with which the gospel material is presented. It lacks every evidence of being a complicated invention, but retains every evidence of being a straightforward presentation of facts. The material strikes us as unusually free from theological bias. Mark appears to present Jesus as the wonderful Messiah sent from God, but even this is so uncertainly expressed that there is considerable room for argument.

As compared with Paul's letters, the theological element in the gospels is reduced to an almost negligible minimum. There are touches of eschatology, and there is a definite view of the nature of God. But even the Kingdom of God is not clearly defined, and can be interpreted in various ways. Paul, on the other hand, is concerned with such matters as salvation and the Jewish-Christian relationship. The latter

1. Dodd, AP, 179.

was one of the most pressing problems of early Christianity. If the gospels are the result of community needs, why did not the community include decisive statements of Jesus relative to the way gentiles should be taken into the faith? Why is there no mention of circumcision? or of the law, except for the contention that Jesus fulfilled it? The fact is, we can reconstruct the problems of the early churches from Paul's letters, but those same problems are utterly neglected in the gospels. We could never even guess them from the gospels alone. Why would the community invent (or preserve) a saying of Jesus about divorce, and yet offer Paul no help in the question of marriage and virgins? Paul himself gives the answer. He had no "word from the Lord" on that question. The gospels are not flights of the imagination. They are collections of biographical form-units, preserved with jealous care and historical accuracy.

Let us look at the same matter from a different angle. Taylor has noted at least thirty-five so-called Pronouncement Stories of Jesus. That is, these stories include important sayings of Jesus relative to vital questions of the time. But of what time? the time of Jesus or the period of the Gentile church? Notably the former, for the following simple reason: Out of the thirty-five items, twenty are found in Mark, the oldest gospel; four or five are found in Q, the oldest collection of sayings; seven or nine are found in Luke, who is generally conceded to have had a reliable special source; and

one in Matthew's special material. But not one is found in John. In other words, the farther we get from the actual date of the life of Jesus, the scarcer these items become. Barton expresses it thus: "If it were true that they were creations of the Christian consciousness, they should be more numerous in the later than in the earlier Gospels. In reality the reverse is true..... In all probability many of these stories took shape in Christian tradition in the course of the first decade after Pentecost. Personally I regard that, not as a probability, but as a certainty".¹ The position of Bultmann, who regards practically all these items as unhistorical outgrowths of the imagination of the early church, becomes obviously untenable. From the standpoint of Formgeschichte, the above facts are evidence for the historical trustworthiness of the tradition. "Some form-critics have been too skeptical, but on the whole they have helped us to visualize, at least in dim outline, but in a vital way, how at the very beginning of the apostolic history, while eyewitnesses were abundant, the Gospel traditions in all their important features were formed."²

It is remarkable that the evangelists allow so little evident influence of their own personalities; or if, with Bultmann, we are willing to canonize the whole primitive community, it is remarkable that the nature of that community

1. Barton, AA, 36.

2. Barton, AA, 36.

is so veiled in the gospels. "...We see that we have a story of singular objectivity and simplicity. Its aim might be described as the presenting of the public ministry of Jesus, his remarkable works and words in about the sequence in which they are believed by the author to have occurred.... So little has the author thrust himself into the picture that we look in vain for any word about his plan or purpose in writing or for any explicit interpretation of his own upon a word or work of Jesus".¹

In our effort to rediscover the historical qualities of this material we must always bear in mind that the formgeschichtlich approach minimizes the importance of the author. The purposes of Formgeschichte do not demand that the author become merely a compiler, nor do they demand any particular view of the literary or oral nature of the tradition. When we treat the material as units, and when literary form takes first place in our thought, we begin to get a true perspective of the simplicity with which a first-century Christian would approach biography. There would be no careful sorting of evidence or balancing of opinion against opinion. There would be a good deal less effort to give local color and interesting detail than in the twentieth century, for the gospels were certainly never compiled with the chief purpose of becoming best-sellers. Many of the usual motives

1. Lyman, CE, 731.

of modern biographers would be absent -- such motives as political acceptability, protection against possible claims of literary theft, and the desire to demonstrate fine literary art for its own sake. Rather, the motive was to tell in a simple and straightforward manner what was known about Jesus. In so doing there remained room for those literary differentiations which have always characterized the gospels, namely, Mark's love for vivid detail and direct discourse, Matthew's blocking of material and interest in poetic forms, and Luke's fine literary style plus interest in the social aspects of the gospel. Neither form criticism nor any other kind of criticism can erase these traits from the gospel narratives. They are differences in presentation and emphasis, not in spirit or attitude. Varieties in literary style, when dealing with essentially the same material, are testimony to the integrity and historicity of the material itself. The Jewishness of Matthew and the Hellenism of Luke are evident -- but there is no intrinsic difference in the Jesus of the two gospels. If the evangelists, or the early Christian community, had been slaves to literary form, surely there would be a different conclusion here. The value of Formgeschichte is that it sets aside false emphasis on Q or some other source for its own sake, and plunges into the living movement itself. Most important, it takes us to the period when constant use kept the tradition in a state of vitality.

- C. Evidence for the early origin and accurate preservation of the gospel form-units. There is a consistent picture of the historical Jesus.

We will now state eleven arguments that are typical of the formgeschichtlich view, verifying the early date and historicity of the gospel material.

1. The topographical references in the gospels indicate that the form-units first lived as tradition on Jewish and Palestinian soil. "Most of the places mentioned in the Gospels can be identified, or are mentioned in purely Jewish documents such as the Talmud".¹ Chorazin and Capernaum, while not mentioned in the Old Testament, are found in the Talmud. We see Jesus pictured in the "villages of Caesarea Philippi", or the "regions" of Tyre and Sidon -- a very definite way of saying that his work was confined to the Jewish settlements surrounding these cities, rather than in the cities themselves. We have already called attention to the case of Mark 7.31.

The topographical location is sometimes unstated. But when it is stated, the information is surprisingly accurate. No one can read the passion narrative without being impressed by the lifelike presentation of Jerusalem, the mount of Olives, and Bethany. It is not so much that the places are mentioned, as that we seem to see the stones of the temple or the steep

1. Burkitt, SLJ, 18.

side of the mountain as Jesus climbed it. Of the three synoptics, Luke is least accurate, as we should expect in consideration of his Asiatic leanings.

The importance of this topographical knowledge is best seen when the synoptics are compared with, let us say, the apocryphal gospels. A good case in point is the Oxyrhynchus fragment, published in 1905, in which the writer's idea of Jerusalem is clearly drawn not from actual knowledge, but from a reading of the Greek version of the Old Testament. Since Formgeschichte generally assumes that the form-units originally had a more or less independent history, their preservation of accurate topographical data is especially significant. It points to direct contact not only with the events but with the actual scenes of the events. The probability of historicity is thereby doubled.

2. The synoptics are more Jewish in form than they are Greek, even though they were probably first written in Greek. Torrey's well known theory of Aramaic origins, regardless of whether we accept it, shows at least this much; The material is Jewish-Aramaic in thought, style, and feeling; there is so much of this in the Greek version that the material can easily be turned back into pleasing Aramaic. Certainly this is a characteristic of literary form, if there is any. By demonstrating that the gospel material exists in such form that it is almost more at home in Aramaic than in Greek, he has testified to the original Palestinian origin of the material --

also, to the fact that very little of that Palestinian flavor was lost in translation, and that the material consequently preserves a very primitive aspect. Moffatt, on the other hand, contends that the Aramaisms in Mark are not evidence of translation from a document in the Hebrew dialect, but of a strongly Aramaic background for the tradition itself. That is, the material smacks of the original Palestinian literary forms.

From the standpoint of Formgeschichte the question of translation is not important. If our gospels are translations of Aramaic documents, then Torrey is right in dating those documents quite early and reducing the period of oral tradition to a minimum. Nothing could more effectively push back the origin of our gospel forms into the primitive period and vouch for their historicity. On the other hand, if we are unwilling to go so far with Torrey, we at least can see the clear Aramaic background of the material as we find it in Greek, and essentially the same conclusion results. That background is genuine, primitive, and Palestinian. It comes from Jews and eyewitnesses -- not the later Christian community in Greek lands. It is notable that Mark retains this characteristic, even though commonly admitted to have been written in Rome. There can be but one answer: The forms of the tradition were fixed in the decade immediately following the crucifixion -- fixed so firmly that even transplanting them to the distant capital and reducing them to writing in a different language could not destroy their antiquity.

For our present purpose, genuine antiquity is almost synonymous with genuine historicity. If we cannot trust the eyewitnesses, surely we can trust nobody.

There is evidence that neither the form nor the content of the material suffered much harm at the time of translation. In some cases the actual Aramaic expressions are retained: Abba; Eli, Eli, lama sabachthani; etc.. Jesus often introduced his words with the solemn "Amen", a distinctly Jewish form which is not well represented by the English translation "verily". Burkitt points out that this "Amen" was a solemn Semitic phrase to introduce a moral saying. Its frequent presence is almost as characteristic as the beard of an ancient rabbi.

An example of the Aramaic idiom is found in Matthew 10.32, where the literal translation is "Every one therefore who shall confess in me before men....". Again, Matthew's record of how Jesus quotes Hosea 6.6, "I desire mercy and not sacrifice", agrees with the Hebrew text rather than the Greek version. The Septuagint had "I desire mercy rather than sacrifice". There are exceptions to this Aramaic coloring, but they are few. Easton points out that the Koiné was the ideal Greek medium into which these materials should be translated. It is the Koiné which leads to the presence of such untranslatable and historically unrecoverable words as in the Lord's prayer.

The translation¹ appears to have been so simple and straightforward that very little of the meaning was lost. It was roughly literal, and the nature of the material was so simple that a more studied type of translation would have been out of place. The very imperfections of the Greek version are a blessing to us, for they show the sincere and unsophisticated manner in which the original tradition was retained. Indeed, it ought to be pointed out that the Greek language is no great barrier to the efforts of the form-critic in recovering the original (presumably Aramaic) form of the tradition. It must be remembered that Palestine, and especially Jerusalem, had many Jews who spoke chiefly or only Greek. In Acts 6.1 the "murmuring of the Grecian Jews against the Hebrews" is not pointed out as an unusual mixture of the two groups. Probably such a combination was taken for granted in Jerusalem; "in other words, Greek-speaking Christianity is practically as old as Christianity itself".² It was in this very earliest stage, when the Aramaic and Greek-speaking groups mingled together, that the traditional material was translated into Koine Greek. The two versions lived side by side in the same community, often even in the same minds, until the expanding nature of the gentile mission gradually drew the Greek version away from

1. We use this term without any implied reference to the oral or written state of the material.

2. Easton, CG, 37.

its parent. There is nothing unusual or unbelievable about this. Indeed, it is the simplest and most natural reconstruction of events, and demonstrates that the Aramaic coloring of the Koine version is just what the formgeschichte approach would lead us to expect. Our present version goes directly back to Palestinian groups, which included both bi-linguists and eyewitnesses.

3. Even more striking than the Jewish literary influence is the Jewish thought-form which pervades the entire gospel. Consider the things about which Jesus speaks to us in the synoptics. What does he discuss, and what questions are put to him? What are the dominant themes which the evangelists have built into their records? Most prominent is the concept of Messiah -- an idea which, in origin and nature, had to be explained to the Greek. The latter had never thought in Messianic terms, and even when the matter was put clearly before him there developed a tendency to slide into gnosticism. It was more in the line of usual Greek thought.

Dibelius points to the items on John the Baptizer and the Annunciation as characteristic Jewish material. They do not bear much historical weight, but their presence furthers our argument. Why would a Christian community, some years after the event, choose to include material on John the Baptizer? It was not for the sake of the material itself,

nor because of their interest in John (note the tendency in some quarters to think that John's followers were really competitors of the gospel). It was because these items came to them firmly attached to the tradition. They were retained in Greek circles in spite of their Jewish flavor, not because of it. Even Christian Jews would have found, at a later date, no reason to include the material about John for its own sake.

The Kingdom of God, in the sense of God's supreme rule, was decidedly a Jewish idea and out of the line of usual Greek thought. A whole list of such examples could be given, including "the day of judgment", "treasure in heaven", "Abraham's bosom", "resurrection at the last day", "righteousness", "son of man", "forgiveness", etc. Even in the most Hellenized parts of the gospel, Jesus is still called "Rabbi". It would be absolutely impossible to match this list with a similar list showing Greek influence in the thought-forms. The material simply is not there. Now, if Bultmann is right in claiming that much of the gospel material was a product of growing community needs in the gentile mission, how can this situation be explained? Surely the gentiles outside of Palestine, whose feeling of unity with their Jewish brethren was never any too keen, would not be at pains to weed out everything that savored of their own thought and tradition, and to

replace it with something essentially foreign. Bultmann's contention stands condemned by the evidence. It was incumbent upon the Greek communities to preserve this material and write it down in the Greek language. If they expected the apocalyptic return of the Savior, to know the actual words and works of Jesus was a matter of life and death. They were bound by conscience to keep the tradition in a pure state, and in that early period there were still plenty of eye-witnesses to act as censors. The Christian community itself was probably the harshest censor. Formgeschichte stresses the picture of an active community -- and the community is always stricter in the duty of censorship than is a single individual. It is worth while to remember how Paul was careful to distinguish between his own advice and the words of Jesus: "But unto the married I give charge, yea not I, but the Lord..... But to the rest say I, not the Lord.....".¹

4. The gospel forms follow early Jewish lines in their approach to typical Jewish problems of the day. Consider the items on formal observance of the law, as found in the "Woes" of Mt. 23: "Woe unto you, scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites!" What are the accusations against these so-called hypocrites?

A. They sit on Moses' seat, but their interest is in bread phylacteries and the title of Rabbi. B. They shut

1. I Cor. 7. 10-12.

up the kingdom of heaven as if under lock and key; they compass sea and land to make one proselyte, but in so doing turn him into a "son of Gehenna". C. They make binding an oath by the gold of the temple, but not an oath by the temple itself. D. They tithe possessions, but forget justice and mercy. E. They wash with formality the outside of the cup, but resort to extortion and excess; they give a good appearance, but are inwardly dead; they condemn the ancients who killed prophets, but do not better themselves. It would be hard to find in the Talmud or other Jewish writings any more distinctly Jewish thought-forms than these. However, we are concerned also with literary form. To be sure, this discourse material has not been so vigorously attacked as has the narrative, but in the tenacity of primitive Jewish forms we cannot divorce the thought from its literary expression. Each new invective against the scribes and Pharisees is couched in its own brief, complete, penetrating paragraph. "Woe unto you" runs through these paragraphs like the refrain of a dirge. Would Mark write material like this in Rome, if it were not founded on fact? Or would Luke discover it in Asia Minor? Or would the "community" invent it to solve the problems of non-Palestinians? The fact that it is presented in these short, cogent, refrain-like paragraphs marks the material as primitive, and preserved at first through oral tradition. The question as to whether Jesus spoke all the "Woes" at one time, or whether they were

collected by the evangelist, is of little historical importance. The former would be most natural.

We see Jesus in the "regions" surrounding the Gentile cities. We hear his instruction to "go into no way of the gentiles". The only contacts with gentiles in Mark are the Syro-Phoenician woman and the Centurion beneath the cross, both pointed out as exceptions to the rule. Jesus is habitually called "Rabbi". The other party to a dialogue is often a group of disciples -- a form-setting found in rabbinic sources. Exceptions to the rules of Jewish literary form are so few that we may reservedly call the gospels homogeneous. There is contrast but no conflict. There are varieties of discourse and narration, but certain forms stand out so dominantly that they can be traced back to Jesus himself. "The material is homogeneous and inimitable; it expresses not the varied experiences of a group but the religious outlook of a single and supreme genius. Consequently in this part of the tradition we have reached a solid foundation; we are brought face to face with the historic teachings of Jesus".¹ This does not mean that we have all Jesus' words verbatim, or that the sermon on the mount was preached all at once. It means that we definitely retain the ipsissimus spiritus of Jesus, and in all probability many of the ipsissima verba as well.

1. Easton, CG, 40.

The predominance of Jewish forms in the gospels is neither an accident nor a planned counterfeit. It is the evidence of true primitive tradition. If the gospels as a whole are compared with Babylonian and classic Greek literature, they will be found to resemble the former more than the latter. This is especially true of the miracle stories, for which it is difficult to find true parallels in the Greek field. The belief in one all-powerful God was not native to Greek thought. However, it was distinctly native to Palestinian Judaism.

5. As a corollary to the above material, we may note an almost total lack of those forms which the epistles and Acts show to have been typical of later Hellenistic Christianity. We must search the gospels in vain for anything suggesting a trinitarian benediction, or any reference to the gifts of the Spirit as portrayed by Paul. The synoptics have no "in Christ" or "salvation through faith" -- items which one might easily label as Pauline sayings-forms. There is little on prophecy, in the sense that prophecy is considered by Paul. There is no mention at all of "tongues". Indeed, while much Christology can be based upon the synoptic gospels, it is almost impossible to talk about the Christology of the gospels themselves. Jesus nowhere claims for himself omniscience, preexistence, or Davidic descent. It is not

even definite that he represented himself as Messiah. But when we read one of the speeches in Acts, there claims are made for Jesus with vigor and argumentative power. Why did Luke in his gospel omit all these items, and in Acts include them with almost offensive repetition? Why are the literary forms so different? It is clearly because Luke was dealing with two entirely different things -- in one case a collection of historical tradition so fixed that he dared not tamper with it, and in the other case with the development of a gentile mission in which he had personally taken part.

We have already noted the absence of synoptic material relating to the gentile mission, which was the field of Luke's own interests and work. Neither is there any development of the sacraments -- one of the major tenets of the later Christian community. A literary comparison of Luke and Acts (such as that of Hawkins) shows that the two are definitely by one and the same hand, probably that of Luke; but a form comparison of the two would scarcely give the slightest hint of similar authorship (the term being used in the sense of either composer or compiler).

6. The synoptics give every evidence of being couched in such form as to make the units easily remembered. This, to be sure, is almost the starting point of Formgeschichte, but we now consider it as an evidence for the historicity of the material itself. If Jesus presented his

teaching in this manner, he was following the practice of Jewish rabbis of his day. Easton states that Formgeschichte definitely proves one thing: "The units of which the Synoptic tradition is composed, be they dialogues, miracles, narrative paragraphs, parables, poem stanzas or groups of prose sayings, are all exceedingly easy to memorize. And we cannot fail to recognize that these forms were utilized precisely because they were easy to memorize; that is, because they could be transmitted readily in the oral tradition. In other words, form-study brings us into contact with the earliest Christian pedagogy, and so should prove a fruitful field of study, particularly in the light it will throw on the early Palestinian Christian interests."¹

Presenting the material in a form to memorize was an oriental or Jewish standard of pedagogy rather than a Roman-Greek one. We recall that the Jews took great pride in retaining absolutely verbatim large bodies of unwritten religious material, handing it down from mouth to mouth with complete accuracy. Every rabbi was supposed to memorize much, if not all, of the law, and to be prepared to quote it without notes. Crum contends that Jesus, in the same manner, repeated his major teachings again and again in the same form, until the disciples knew them from memory. It was this body of spoken material which formed

1. Easton, GBG, 77.

Q. It is characterized by a poetry-form, its use of Old Testament language, and its general accord with Judaistic Christianity. Thus Crum identifies what might be called a "Q form", although many of its characteristics can equally well be applied to non-Q material.

Without limiting itself to the two-source theory, Formgeschichte approaches the material directly, and shows not only that the forms are easy to memorize, but that they were probably arranged that way with purpose. There is too much parallelism, too many doublets and repetitions, to blame them all upon any community program or counterfeiting genius. Proverbs, parabolic narratives, riddles, and tales were the stock-in-trade of the oriental teacher. "A casual glance at the gospels and especially at the three earliest, Matthew, Mark, and Luke, proves that the traditions assembled in them exhibit Oriental influences in this sense. This is equally true both of the sayings and doings of Jesus".¹ It stands to reason that the sayings-forms would come from Jesus, while the narrative forms would probably come from Peter and the other disciples, including verbatim quotations from the master whenever possible. In speaking of the discourse material, Mary Ely Lyman says, "There is assurance of the authenticity of our present record in the early date at which the tradition

1. Dibelius, *ANT*, 27.

was committed to writing, but there is even greater assurance that comes from the inherent nature of the material itself. Here in this Q material is a prophetic fervor, an insight and penetration into life which convinces us that we are in possession of the Master's own words. The sayings show the intensity and passion of prophetic experience, as in the record of the temptation of Jesus, and the intuitive understanding of life that is the possession of genius".¹

Of all the gospel forms, the parable is most easily remembered. This form of the parable is found in the gospels and nowhere else. No one has discovered more than a few scattered reminders of the true gospel parable in Greek or rabbinic literature. The conciseness of the presentation, the clear-cut portrayal of characters, and the prominence with which the chief point stands out -- these mark the gospel parable as a definite literary form instituted by Jesus himself. "They have upon them, taken as a whole, the stamp of a highly individual mind, in spite of the re-handling they have inevitably suffered in the course of transmission.... Their appeal to the imagination fixed them in the memory and gave them a secure place in the tradition. Certainly there is no part of the Gospel record which has for the reader a clearer ring of authenticity".² Moreover, it is easy to separate the

1. Lyman, CE, 21.

2. Dodd, PK, 11.

authentic parable from the accretions which the community or compiler has put upon it. The latter usually show an allegorizing motive, and mark the material as foreign to the directness and simplicity of the parable as used by Jesus. This tendency is shown even in Mark by the case of the sower, Mark 4. 10-20. First of all, the community implies a false and unworthy motive on the part of Jesus, "that seeing they may see, and not perceive; and hearing they may hear, and not understand; lest haply they should turn again, and it should be forgiven them"¹. It is preposterous that Jesus should tell a parable in crystal-clear terms for the purpose of ~~confusing~~ people. It was the later community, tempted to fit the parable to its own didactic purposes, that introduced this element in self-defense. These verses go on to identify the seed as the word, Satan as the enemy, etc.. All that was clear and cogent about the parable has been lost by allegorization. The interpretation is out of harmony with the normal method of Jesus' teaching. The vocabulary is more reminiscent of Paul, and the whole allegorizing process reflects a later gentile environment. Harnack included Matthew's material on the tares and the dragnet in essentially the same category.

The sayings-forms are, in some respects, merely undeveloped parables. That is, many of the simplest sayings-forms are related to the parables as the short-short-story

1. Mk. 4.12.

is related to the short story. They present a picture from everyday life. For example, "It is easier for a camel to go through a needle's eye, than for a rich man to enter into a kingdom of God";¹ or again, "When therefore thou doest alms, sound not a trumpet before the...".² This teaching by means of brief word-pictures is almost as unique as the parables, and adds its weight to the contention that the gospel forms reflect a remarkable individual rather than the didactic efforts of a community.

It is the form more than anything else which determines for us whether Jesus actually made a given statement. The "where" and "when" is not the chief aim of *Formgeschichte*. It matters little whether the material is more than substantially correct in order. But if we recognize a form which is characteristic of Jesus, such as parable, then we have direct light on the question of historicity. Even the miracle stories and narrative units usually need details of time and place only for purposes of verisimilitude. When such details are really important for historicity, they almost always constitute an inseparable part of the form. For example, items having to do with the temple could happen nowhere but in Jerusalem, and events in the north having to do with the sea must be located

1. Mk. 10.25.
2. Mt. 6.2.

near the Sea of Galilee.

The poetic form of the gospels is so important that it will be treated alone.

7. "The fact seems to be that many persons in this period prized oral tradition above written records, probably because the oral teaching represented not only essentially everything contained in the gospels, but being more fluid in character it was more easily adapted to individual needs and local conditions. Papias is reported to have said that in his youth he did not think he could derive so much profit from the contents of books as from 'the utter-¹ance of a living and abiding voice'." If Papias represented the general outlook of his period, it is not surprising that the oral aspect of the tradition dominated in the years before Q and Mark crystalized it. Not being a generation blessed with printing, the actual words of a teacher were held in correspondingly greater esteem. If men who had known the apostles remained alive in the time of Papias, and were for that reason esteemed as teachers in the Christian community, surely in the period from 30 A.D. to 65 A.D. the living voices of apostles and eyewitnesses must have been more popular than written materials. In other words, the forms of the gospel material were adapted to memory. The apostles had been with Jesus long enough to recall with ease the most popular material.

1. Case, HJ, 208.

We must bear in mind that the discourse preserved for us is only a small portion of what Jesus must have said. It is really the kernel of the matter. In the narrative items, verbatim accuracy is not so important. There are many ways of telling a fine story or a bit of biography. We have seen, however, that even the narratives ring with the detail and verisimilitude which mark them as accounts preserved by eye-witnesses.

8. The presence of unusual or unexpected elements in the gospel forms is almost always a proof of historicity rather than otherwise. For example, those who have made a specialty of such study tell us that Mark reproduces a number of words which are quite rare, and certainly not characteristic of his own vocabulary. Among these are ἁμάρτημα, ἄρρωστος, θανάτω, and ἐν πνεύματι ἀκαθάρτῳ.¹ Regardless of whether Mark's immediate sources were written or oral, in these cases he reached back to preserve rather than to destroy. (This is a very specialized argument, and we are aware of the weaknesses to which such intricacies fall heir.)

Even what appear to be discrepancies in the gospel account often turn out to be, under the searching eye of Formgeschichte, evidence for the careful preservation of the material and the earnest intent of the compiler. The passion story is universally viewed as a trustworthy unit, dating back

1. See Cadoux, SG.

to the earliest period. Yet Mark 11-16 contains discrepancies, seams, and doublets, just as Mark 2-10 does. Why is this? It is because, even in the passion narrative, the tradition as it was received was more important than history per se. It is right here that Formgeschichte makes a contribution in the field of historicity. If the earliest carriers of the tradition had been chiefly interested in history for its own sake, they would have had ample opportunity to eliminate these objectionable features. But the earliest Christians demonstrated that their interest lay deeper than the preservation of chronology alone. They sought to preserve the very spirit, purpose, and personality of Jesus. In doing so, certain minor discrepancies were overlooked, and once the tradition had taken definite form (which happened very quickly), even these discrepancies were preserved with care. There is no letter proof of the essential trustworthiness of the tradition during the period of oral transmission.

Let us also apply this conclusion to the earlier portions of the gospel. Mark 6-8 includes an extensive duplication of materials; the most significant item being the miraculous feeding of the multitude, on one occasion five

-
1. Cf. Moffatt, Introduction to the Literature of the New Testament, 237-238.

thousand and on the other four thousand. That part of the material which appears to duplicate is commonly known as Luke's "Great Omission". But did Luke, in making the omission, actually show himself a good preserver of tradition? No, he only showed himself a good historian, which is quite a different matter. Mark, feeling the compulsion to preserve the tradition with verbatim accuracy, and having two versions of the same form-unit before him, included them both. Whether written or oral, his traditions were definitely fixed, and his attitude toward them is clear. Mark's solution of the problem leads us to believe that in such cases, when divergent versions of the same form exist, the divergence occurred very early in the history of gospel tradition. Otherwise, Mark would have felt free to choose one and reject the other -- in doing which he would have become a judge of tradition rather than a preserver of it.

Our above conclusion might be compared to the general attitude of Streeter, who felt that a multiplication of sources increased the authenticity of the events related. Certainly this is true of the material which duplicates in Mark and Q, and may be regarded as a general rule in all cases where extreme diversity of form does not challenge the integrity of the tradition.

9. It is characteristic of all the literary forms of the first century, at least of those prevalent in the Jewish

portions of the Graeco-Roman world, that interest is directed toward the typical incident rather than the historically important incident. This does not mean that the typical incident is itself unhistorical. It merely means that it is given as an example of a whole series of similar events, which could be recorded if one were trying to write a complete account. It is this aspect of the gospel materials which gives them, in the eyes of critics not acquainted with first-century literary forms, the appearance of haziness and uncertainty. The bearer of New Testament tradition was not primarily interested in just where or when a certain event happened or a certain word was spoken. He was more concerned with the type of event or saying which was represented by the example he gave. So far as this point is concerned, it makes little difference whether we consider the attitude of primitive Christians in Jerusalem or the compilers of the canonical records. It is obvious that they all shared the same view.

Examples of these typical instances are the following:

a. "And at even, when the sun did set, they brought unto him all that were sick, and them that were possessed with demons. And all the city was gathered together at the door. And he healed many that were sick with divers diseases....."¹ Note in connection with these verses that we

1. Mk. 1.32-34.

have just been told about the healing of Peter's mother-in-law, Mk. 1. 29-31. In this story there is nothing to indicate that others besides Peter's family were present, or that anything about this healing inaugurated a free-for-all rush to the source of help. Yet the following three verses describe just such a general series of healings. Some critics assume that these verses are editorial on the part of our compiler, but there is no way to prove it. It really makes little difference whether they come from the compiler or are part of the original tradition. As the gospel stands, the healing of Peter's mother-in-law in the typical incident, given as an illustration of many other healings performed at approximately the same time and place. The summary in verses 32-34 is meant to indicate that other examples could be given if an accurate history were kept. This illustrates an attitude which is universally characteristic of the gospel forms.

b. In some cases a number of typical examples are given, and we have a little collection of anecdotes on a particular subject. An excellent sample of this is what Albertz calls the Galilean collection of controversies, 2.1-3.6. In these thirty-four verses we are given five typical examples of the early conflict between Jesus and the established authorities. For historical purposes it is not necessary to demonstrate that these items happened in immediate sequence as recounted. The question of historicity is, Did

these things actually happen? Are the events truly reproduced? Now, Albertz points out that the entire passage¹ is highly Jewish in form, and therefore primitive. We can see a development in the attitude of Jesus. He begins on the defensive and ends on the offensive. Only the high spots are mentioned, yet the form-units are complete in themselves, including the setting, the question put to Jesus, and his answer. "The purpose of the collection is the proof of the necessity of Christ's death by means of a review of the historical conflict of Jesus with his opponents".² Such a review could not include all controversies of this type, but only a representative group of typical incidents, sufficient to give a true picture of the historical situation. The form-units which have been preserved in the collection show normal characteristics. They are typical of the whole field of subject matter under consideration, and may be regarded as historical.

What has just been said applies also to the parables on the Kingdom of Heaven. It would be foolish to infer that Matthew's collection includes all that Jesus ever spoke on the subject. The items that are retained exhibit every characteristic of the parable form -- one of the forms most closely and uniquely associated with Jesus. Moreover, the parables themselves show the Kingdom in a variety of aspects. Is it inward

1. Albertz, S, Ch. 1.

2. Albertz, S. 6.

or outward in character? Will it come by eschatological change or by slow growth? It is obvious that what we have is a group of typical incidents, selected from Jesus' many sayings about the Kingdom. They were preserved much as one takes a few grains from each ear of corn for testing seed. Since they fulfill the requirements of the parable form, and since they represent typical incidents, their historicity may be regarded as established. (Of course other arguments can be brought to bear upon the Kingdom parables, but our attention at the moment is limited to one phase of the question.)

c. Mark 8.11-13 may be treated as a typical incident regarding the demands for a sign. Jesus undoubtedly faced this question again and again. In these verses the Pharisees are pictured as the questioners. Jesus is grieved. It is inferred that he is tired of this request which he has heard so many times before. "Why doth this generation seek a sign?" he asks, as if the whole generation were interested only in that one phase of religious activity. The next sentence denies a sign not to the Pharisees who asked the question, but to the whole "generation". Jesus simply will not work a sign for them. It must be evident to any one that this is a typical incident. The sayings-form is complete, with especial emphasis upon Jesus' own words. But the inclusive character of his statement, as well as the brief

description of the setting, indicates that it is the sort of thing Jesus did again and again. Thus its historicity is affirmed in three ways: A. The literary form is complete and correct. B. The form demonstrates that it was selected as a typical incident. C. If it is typical of a large number of similar encounters, the chances are that the definite data of this particular incident are more accurately preserved by tradition than would be the case if it were a single, isolated event.

d. Matthew has a collection of typical sayings on fulfilling the law, Mt. 5. 17-48. It would be foolish to maintain that all Jesus ever said about the Jewish law is included in this chapter. We are aware that the law, and the place of the law in Israel's history, constituted the core of rabbinic teaching. Jesus would constantly be confronted with such questions. As a Jew, he would himself be interested in the law. The items in Matthew 5 ought not to be regarded as inclusive, but as typical sayings of Jesus on this phase of his work. Among the references which can be regarded about divorce, and the fate of a woman who survived seven legal husbands.

Many other examples could be offered. What we wish to demonstrate is not that isolated form-units may be treated in this way, but that the first-century mind invariably sought

the typical example rather than a complete historical account. The above illustrations are sufficient to show that this was true, and an examination of the gospel forms will disclose no contrary evidence. Naturally, this cannot guarantee the historicity of every incident that is preserved for us. Indeed, some critics would argue that the most typical incident is likely to be a theological invention -- a sort of unhistorical synthesis of various historical facts. This is not a valid argument. If a compiler were seeking typical incidents to illustrate the life or teachings of his hero, he would pick those incidents which were most widely known and loved. Leaving the compiler momentarily out of the picture, even the community would guarantee the same thing through its oral tradition. Those items which would be most quickly forgotten would be the items which were least definite and clear-cut. Thus it came about that the periphery of the tradition readily dropped away, and what remained was the solid center -- incidents and sayings which were so widely known and so universally esteemed that they were everywhere recognized as typical of the history of Jesus.

One of the great contributions of Formgeschichte to our view of the historical Jesus is this -- the community itself was the best censor of the material which should be preserved. Oral tradition in the very first stages tended to retain only what was widely accepted as typical and trust-

worthy. Every view of the literary forms and their history leads us to this conclusion. The custom of the day insisted that concrete problems should be treated in the light of general principles. Conversely, general principles were established by retaining in tradition some typical instances of their application. A misunderstanding of this feature of first-century literature can lead to the notion that our gospel material is highly idealized, or a result of the inventive imagination. But a proper understanding of it goes far toward establishing the gospel material as a sort of lowest common denominator for the entire tradition about Jesus.

10. We now turn our attention to the presence of poetry, rhythm, and rime as elements in the literary form of the gospel materials. This matter has been carefully considered by Burney in The Poetry of Our Lord, and is extensively treated by Mary Ely Lyman in The Christian Epic. If we are to consider literary form, this matter must be given a thorough airing, for it will appear that the presence of poetic elements leads to a definite argument in favor of their historicity.

If the material was first preserved by oral tradition, it would be couched in such form as would make an instant appeal to the memory. This means the appeal of poetic form and imagery, with the symmetry and rhythm which characterize that style. It is a universal rule of literature that such

forms are not only easiest to remember, but their character best guarantees them against the ravages of time. A poem is remembered verbatim; prose is remembered in its general outline.

Burney has made such a complete investigation of the subject that we are deeply indebted to him. But the formgeschichtlich interpretation he scarcely touched. In speaking of the Lord's Prayer as an example, Burney says, "It is obvious that these traits (of rhythm and rime) must have been intended by our Lord as an aid to memory, and would have acted as such; hence it is scarcely overbold to believe that the Matthaean tradition represents the actual words of the prayer as they issued from His lips. So with other sayings which exhibit the formal characteristics of Hebrew poetry. Conformity to a certain type which can be abundantly exemplified -- and that not only in one source, but in all the sources which go to form the Gospels -- is surely a strong argument for substantial authenticity".¹ Thus Burney is so convinced by his argument that he can definitely contend that Matthew gives the ipsissima verba of Jesus. Just as the redactors of the Pentateuch telescoped their sources and reproduced them verbatim, so the New testament compilers rearranged the order but preserved the content as nearly verbatim as a greek version would allow. Burney points out that the only alternative to

1. Burney, PL, 6.

such a view is the unlikely proposal that the redactors, even if "they possessed merely a vague recollection or tradition of the sayings, must have set themselves, one and all, to dress them in a parallelistic and rhythmical form".¹ But the various redactors, operating in this way, could not possibly have turned out materials so identical in form and content as are the gospels. Burney's point is clear. Either the evangelists were content to copy their sources, or else they all invented independently. The latter position is obviously untenable, and runs counter to all the discoveries of recent New Testament study.

A good example of how the poetry of a form-unit leads us to have greater confidence in its historicity is found in Mark 13.9-13. This passage has a distinctly rhythmical pattern. Burney recounts that he first separated this unit from the remainder of Mark 13 on the basis of its poetic form.² Afterwards he noticed that exactly the same form-unit stands in Matthew 10.17-22 in an entirely different context, namely, the commission of the twelve. In all probability Matthew's use of the material better represents its original position, for the poem is not essentially eschatological in character. The important thing is that these four verses form a poetic form-unit of their own -- a unit which is recognizable and which possesses individual identity in both Matthew and Mark. Such

1. Burney, PL, 6.

2. Burney, PL, 8.

a situation verifies the historicity of the discourse itself.

Let us note some other characteristics of the poetic form. The greater portion of such material is found in Q, since it is largely discourse. Again, the sermon on the mount contains a lion's share of the discourse material which is not already authenticated by its parable form. Of this Q material Mary Ely Lyman says, "It is easy to see why it was not preserved as a separate work after it had been incorporated in the larger gospels, but because we do not have it now as an entity by itself, it should not be forgotten that we owe an immeasurable debt to this early record which preserved so faithfully, not only the vital emphases of Jesus' teaching, but the prophetic fire of his utterance".¹ Just as the Old Testament prophets couched their thunder in poetic forms, so did Jesus. It is a distinctly Hebrew method, requiring personal rather than group authorship.

The outstanding characteristic of such poetic forms is parallelism, which Burney classifies as follows:

a. In synonymous parallelism the second line echoes or duplicates the first line. For purposes of comparison, consider the lines from Psalm 114:²

"When Israel came out of Egypt,
The house of Jacob from among a strange people

Judah became His sanctuary,
Israel His dominion.

1. Lyman, CE, 25.

2. All poetic quotations in this section are from Burney, PL.

The sea beheld and fled,
The Jordan turned backward.....".

The Old Testament is full of such parallelism, sometimes continuing through rather lengthy passages. In the New Testament it is more frequently limited to single or double couplets, such as :

"Is it lawful on the sabbath to do good or to do harm?
To save a life or to kill? Mk. 3.4.

"There is nothing hid that shall not be made manifest,
Nor secret that shall not come to light". Mk.4.22,Lk.8.17.

"Do ye not perceive, nor understand?
Have ye your heart hardened?
Having eyes, see ye not?
And having ears, hear ye not?
And do ye not remember?" Mk. 8.17-18.

"Love your enemies,
Do good to your haters,
Bless your cursers,
Pray for your persecutors". Lk.7.27-28,Mt.5.44(Q).

"He causeth His sun to rise upon evil and good,
And raineth upon just and unjust". Mt. 5.45 (Q).

"Be not anxious for your life, what ye shall eat,
Neither for your body, what ye shall put on:

Is not the life more than meat?
And the body than raiment?" Lk.12.22-23, Mt.6.25(Q).

b. In antithetic parallelism the second line expresses a sharp contrast to the first:

"For Yahweh knoweth the way of the righteous,
But the way of the ungodly shall perish". Ps. 1.6.

"They are brought down and fallen,
But we are risen, and stand upright." Ps. 20.8.

"The memory of the just is blessed;
But the name of the wicked shall rot". Prov. 10.7.

This type, above all others, is typical of Jesus' manner

...the

The
... ..
... ..

... ..
... ..

... ..
... ..

... ..
... ..
... ..
... ..

... ..

... ..
... ..
... ..

... ..
... ..

... ..
... ..

... ..
... ..

... ..
... ..

... ..
... ..

... ..
... ..

... ..
... ..

... ..

of speech:

"Every good tree bringeth forth good fruits,
But the corrupt tree bringeth forth evil fruits".
Mt. 7.17.

"Not that which goeth into the mouth defileth the man,
But that which cometh out of the mouth, that defileth
the man".
Mt. 15.11.

"He that findeth his life shall lose it;
And he that loseth his life for My sake shall find it".
Mt. 10.39.

"So the last shall be first,
And the first last".
Mt. 20.16.

"Whosoever exaleth himself shall be humbled;
And whoseover humbleth himself shall be exalted".
Mt. 23.12.

"The sabbath was made for man,
And not man for the sabbath".
Mk. 2.27.

This appears to be Jesus' most common method of summing up a parable or expressing a proverbial truth. The average Bible reader will discover that it is these items which have found a permanent place in his memory. It was the same in 30 A.D.. Jesus used these forms in order that his disciples could easily recall them. They were still remembered when others were forgotten. This accounts for their surprising prevalence in the canonical gospels.

A special type of antithetic parallelism is found in the argument a minori ad maius. "This form of argument is included among the seven rules of logic formulated by the great Rabbi Hillel, who flourished just before the Christian

...the ...
...the ...
...the ...
...the ...
...the ...

...the ...
...the ...
...the ...

...the ...
...the ...
...the ...

...the ...
...the ...
...the ...

...the ...
...the ...
...the ...

...the ...
...the ...
...the ...

...the ...
...the ...
...the ...

...the ...
...the ...
...the ...

...the ...
...the ...
...the ...

...the ...
...the ...
...the ...

...the ...
...the ...
...the ...

...the ...
...the ...
...the ...

era". Examples:

"If ye, being evil, know how to give good gifts to
your children,
How much more shall your heavenly Father give good
things to them that ask Him?" Mt. 7.11, Lk. 11.13.

"If they do these things in a green tree,
What shall be done in the dry?" Lk. 23.31.

"If they have called the master of the house Beelzebub,
How much more those of his household?" Mt. 10.25b.

c. In synthetic (constructive) parallelism the second
line builds upon the first as one layer of bricks is laid
upon another. "There is parallelism, not in thought, but
in form only":

"I did call upon Yahweh with my voice,
And He heard me out of his holy hill". Ps. 3.4.

"And He put a new song in my mouth,
Even praise to our God.

Many shall behold and fear,
And shall trust in Yahweh". Ps. 40.3.

"They make broad their phylacteries,
And enlarge their fringes.

And love the chief place at the feasts,
And the chief seats in the synagogues,

And the salutations in the market-places,
And to be called of men, Rabbi.....". Mt. 23.5-10.

A particular type of synthetic parallelism Burney calls step-
parallelism. The second line repeats a thought of the first
line, but carries it one step farther:

"He that receiveth this child in My name,
receiveth Me;
And he that receiveth Me, receiveth Him that
sent Me". Mk. 9.37, Mt. 18.5, Lk. 9.48.

"He that receiveth you, receiveth Me;
And he that receiveth Me, receiveth Him that
 sent Me".

Mt. 10.40.

Although Burney¹ nowhere uses the word "Formgeschichte", his study of parallelism as characteristic of the gospel forms is an important piece of work. His conclusions involve formgeschichtlich methods. Most important is the discovery that "this form of parallelism characterizes our Lord's teaching in all the Gospel-sources. We have it in M and Q frequently, in the matter peculiar to Luke, and, most markedly of all, in the Fourth Gospel. This is conclusive evidence that our Lord did so frame His teaching; and it is obvious that a maxim cast in antithetic parallelism would fix itself in men's minds more readily and surely than if it were framed in any other form.... In this and in similar forms of antithesis we may surely believe that we possess our Lord's ipsissima verba more nearly than in any sentence otherwise expressed".² Although this statement was made about antithetic parallelism, it applies with equal force to other types. Form consideration of literary form alone, we find in the gospels a teacher who was also a poet. One cannot doubt the individuality of the teacher himself. The similarity of the poetic forms points to only one personality,

1. Burney, PL, 21, and 82.

2. Burney, PL, 84.

and not to the hit-and-miss inventiveness of an early religious community.

The poetic style is not a thing for which we must search with painstaking diligence. It stands out in every chapter, and is characteristic of varied forms. If the poetic parallels were found only in Matthew, or if they were found in Q to the exclusion of L, the case would be different. It might then be argued that a secondary source was responsible, or that a disciple of Jesus put his own poetry into the master's mouth. Indeed, comparison will sometimes show that Mark's version glossed the poetic form more than did Matthew or Luke.¹ But when the form is found to be characteristic of Jesus' words, whether quoted in M, Q, Mark, L, or any other gospel categories one cares to mention, the force of the argument is very great. If every source testifies that this method of expression was characteristic of Jesus, then items which bear it may be regarded as having prima facie evidence of authenticity.

In this phase of our study we have another blessing, namely, that we possess in the Old Testament such extensive examples of the Hebrew poetic form. The Psalms, Proverbs, Job, Song of Solomon, and large portions of the prophetic writings may be considered in this group. We are not forced

1. Cf. Burney, PL, 85.

and the fact that the only one who has been able to do so is the

author of this book.

The author of this book is a man who has been able to do so

and the fact that the only one who has been able to do so is the

author of this book.

The author of this book is a man who has been able to do so

and the fact that the only one who has been able to do so is the

author of this book.

The author of this book is a man who has been able to do so

and the fact that the only one who has been able to do so is the

author of this book.

The author of this book is a man who has been able to do so

and the fact that the only one who has been able to do so is the

author of this book.

The author of this book is a man who has been able to do so

and the fact that the only one who has been able to do so is the

author of this book.

The author of this book is a man who has been able to do so

and the fact that the only one who has been able to do so is the

author of this book.

The author of this book is a man who has been able to do so

and the fact that the only one who has been able to do so is the

author of this book.

The author of this book is a man who has been able to do so

to establish the standing of the gospels from internal evidence alone. There is ample material for comparison. Indeed, the standards of Hebrew poetry are discovered in the Old Testament material, rather than in the New Testament. It is conformity to these standards which leads us to the conclusion that New Testament material is authentic, historical, essay to memorize, and the actual product of the mind of Jesus.

To be sure, it may be objected that the Aramaic of Jesus' time was a different language from the Old Testament Hebrew, and that we have no extra-Biblical sources in Aramaic with which to make comparisons. This argument is of little weight. It hinders Burney from speaking too boldly about rhythm and rime, but it can in no way affect the parallelisms or the obvious poetic quality of the material. Indeed, the Aramaic section of Daniel¹ constitutes some ground for comparison, and its use of the poetic style is reassuring. We do not stand on probability or theory. If there is any such thing as literary form, poetry is certainly a recognizable characteristic. Thus Formgeschichte takes an old and universally recognized aspect of the gospel material, and emerges with new evidence for its historicity -- even with the boldness to contend that the ipsissima verba of Jesus are

1. Daniel 2.4b-7.28.

still preserved in many of these passages.

Where there is a difference in double tradition material, an examination of the poetic element will show that Matthew more closely preserved the Hebrew characteristics. This is in line with the general attitude of the first gospel, and is also in line with what Luke might be expected to do. To him the parallelisms would sometimes appear repetitious, and he would allow himself to make occasional simplifications -- not in substance, but in form. This does not alter the more important fact that Luke almost invariably follows Jesus' parallelisms, just as do Matthew and Mark.

Another characteristic of Hebrew poetry is rhythm. This is more a matter of recurrent stresses than of metrical feet. While Burney enthusiastically tackles this problem, and even that of rime, the method is a good deal less reliable than in the case of parallelism. For the study of rhythm and rime it is necessary to translate the gospels back into Aramaic -- in which case it is more than easy for the resulting rhythm to be the work of a translator. However, there is an inherent relationship between parallelism and rhythm. This is apparent even in the English. For example:

"Give not / the holy thing / to the dogs,
And cast not / your pearls / before swine". Mt. 7.6.

"Forsaking / the commandment / of God,
Ye hold / the tradition / of men". Mk. 7.8.

"He that is faithful / in little, / is

faithful / in much;
 And he that is dishonest / in little, / is
 dishonest / in much". Lk. 16.10.

It must also be noted that, even where there is no parallelism and where the material could scarcely be poetic, there is still a suggestion of rhythm in the prose. This is one of the obvious characteristics of the gospel material, and accounts for the ease with which the narrative form-units were remembered. Those with a rhythmic character were fortunate enough to be preserved while others were forgotten.

The study of rime is more difficult. The retranslator finds it easy, almost imperative, to let rime enter into the Aramaic setting of such passages as the Lord's prayer or the beatitudes.¹ Other tempting cases would be Matthew 5.39-40, 7.6, 8.20, 25.31ff, Luke 6.27-29, 9.58, etc.. Such retranslation is interesting, but is highly subjective. An occasional rime by no means establishes the authenticity of the material. However, if that rime is found in material where other indications point to a reproduction of the ipsissima verba of Jesus, then the evidence is strengthened. All that we need to establish is the general principle that the essentials of Hebrew poetry can be found in the gospel forms.

1. Cf. Burney, PL, 161ff, where it is shown that rime was actually employed in contemporary Jewish prayers.

11. The next consideration is the uniformity of certain historical conclusions as evidenced in all the various literary forms. The arguments of the last several pages did not require that the New Testament material be divided into strict classifications. We were able to consider the form-characteristics of the material without definitely labelling every form-unit. This was a great advantage, because it enabled us to use the formgeschichtlich method without becoming too subjective. However, we must now take recourse to the classifications in order to show that our evangelists did not use these forms slavishly, and that the forms do not contradict one another. Our argument and conclusion will follow this course: A. We will demonstrate that there are certain major conclusions about the historical Jesus, of a more or less general nature, which may be drawn from a perusal of the gospel material as a whole. B. We will note the fact that testimony leading to these conclusions is not restricted to any one literary form. For example, Jesus came not to destroy the law but to fulfill it. This notion is found not merely in Q (Matthew 5, but the first reference naturally to come to mind), but also in miracle-forms, anecdotal sayings, dialogue forms, and even the passion unit. If it were found in Q only, we might still doubt that this notion reflected the life of the historical Jesus. But when all the various literary forms give the same testimony, it can

no longer be regarded as anything less than a historical fact. C. We may then conclude that each of the form classifications gives a surprisingly complete picture of Jesus by itself. But more important, the various form-groups all give the same picture of the historical Jesus.

We may also note that this aspect of Formgeschichte has never been stressed. Critics seem to have been more concerned with the details of classification than with the historical evidence of the material. For this reason we again stress the necessity for utmost simplicity in classification.¹ The classifications are at best only a secondary consideration -- a handy manner of putting like with like for purposes of comparison and contrast. So we shall exercise freedom to break away from earlier classifications, and to follow the simpler method outlined in this thesis. The items listed under each of the following topics are not intended to be exhaustive, but merely by way of example. Each classification will be represented, but it is not necessary to note all possible illustrations under each classification in order to demonstrate our thesis. While parallels may often be found in the various gospels, they will not be listed. The

1. In the next few pages there might be some difference of opinion about classification. I also take the liberty of using the symbols M and L rather freely in cases of prominent single tradition. I have not listed the parallels in double and triple tradition, but assume that they will be considered nevertheless. A number of illustrations have been borrowed from Dodd, HG, Chapter 4.

references given are the most complete form-units, and probably the most authentic.

a. Jesus defended the outcasts, and freely associated with them. Note that in the following examples many kinds of literary form are represented, coming from various literary sources. With contrasting methods they all agree in showing Jesus as a historical personality who was marked by his friendship for the unfortunate and the outcast.

- | | | |
|---------------------|------------------------------------|---------------------|
| A. Mark 2.15-17 | Eating with sinners. | Anecdotal saying. |
| B. Mark 2.14 | Call of Levi. | Narrative anecdote. |
| C. Luke 19.1-10 | Zacchaeus indident | Anecdotal saying. |
| D. Luke 7.36-50 | Anointed by sinful woman. | Anecdotal saying. |
| E. John 7.53-8.11 | Adulterous woman. | Johannine anecdote. |
| F. Luke 15.1-7 | Lost sheep. | Parable. |
| G. Luke 18.10-14 | Pharisees and publicans. | Parable. |
| H. Matthew 11.16-19 | Children in the
market place. | Didactic saying. |
| I. Matthew 21.31-32 | Entering the Kingdom
of Heaven. | Pedagogic dialogue. |

Our present concern is not whether all or any of these items may be regarded as historical in itself. The story of the adulterous woman, for example, is poorly attested. The point is that varied sources and forms all bear the same testimony on this score. Accordingly, it must be regarded as a consistent part of tradition that Jesus loved the outcasts

and associated with sinners.

b. The life of Jesus was largely a life of isolation.

- | | |
|---|--------------------|
| A. Mark 6.1-6 Rejection at Nazareth. | Narrative anecdote |
| B. Mark 3.31-35 "Who is my mother and my brethren?" | Didactic saying. |
| C. John 7.1-9 Unbelieving brethren. | Pedagogic dialogue |
| D. Matthew 8.20 "Foxes have holes....". | Didactic saying. |
| E. Luke 14.26 Hating father and mother. | Didactic saying. |
| F. Mark 14.50 "They all left him and fled". | Passion story. |

It is not surprising that the parable and miracle forms are of no value on this point. Their nature is such that they could not be used to demonstrate that Jesus lived a solitary life. We must be lenient enough to admit that certain forms fulfill certain purposes better than others. This, indeed, is the starting point of our criticism, and the only reason for having any variety in literature at all. The four forms listed above are sufficient to establish the uniformity of the tradition, and its antiquity.

c. The purpose of Jesus' work was the conquest of evil.

- | | |
|---|------------------------|
| A. Luke 10.18 Satan fallen from heaven. | Anecdotal saying. |
| B. Mark 3.23-26 Kingdom divided against itself. | Parable. |
| C. Mark 3.27 Strong man bound (i.e., Satan overcome and destroyed). | Short parable. |
| D. Matthew 4.1-11 Jesus' temptations. | Controversial dialogue |

E. Mark 1.23-27 Demoniac in a synagogue.¹ Miracle.

F. Mark 5.1-20 Gadarene demoniacs. Miracle.

Thus it can be seen that miracle, parable, dialogue, and sayings-forms all bear witness to Jesus' fundamental enmity to evil, whether it was met in the guise of a demon-possessed man or in temptation to do wonders for selfish purposes. If an objection is raised to the use of miracle stories in this connection, let us remember that our quest is for the testimony of Formgeschichte. We are talking about form as well as content. It cannot be denied, regardless of one's view of the possibility or impossibility of miracle, that the miracle forms belong to the oldest and best strata of gospel tradition. From our point of view their evidence is valuable.

d. Jesus proclaimed a new order of things.

- A. Matthew 11.13-14 "...until John"; there was
a turning point in history after John. Didactic saying.
- B. Mark 2.21-22 New cloth on old garment; new
wine in old wine-skins; i.e., an entirely
new order of things since Jesus came. Didactic saying.
- C. John 4.4-15 Living water now available. Pedagogic dialogue
- D. Mark 10.1-10 Moses allowed divorce because
of the hardness of men's hearts; that is
now past, and "what God hath joined to-
gether, let not man put asunder". Didactic saying.

1. Note especially verse 24.

- E. Matthew 5.17-48 A new and complete interpretation of the law is now in effect.¹ Didactic saying.
- F. John 2.1-10 Water changed to wine.² Miracle.
- e. Prophecy is being fulfilled in the life of Jesus.
- A. Luke 4.16-30 Jesus in the Nazareth synagogue. Didactic saying.
- B. Matthew 22.1ff Marriage feast; "The wedding is ready". Parable.
- C. Matthew 13.13-17 Isaiah fulfilled; many righteous men desired to see the things now seen. Didactic saying.
- D. John 4.35 Fields already white. Johannine saying.
- f. Jesus announced approaching judgement.
- A. Mark 12.1-9 The husbandmen. Parable.
- B. Matthew 23.29-36 Woe unto you... All these things shall come upon this generation. Didactic saying (Q).
- C. Luke 19.41-44 Judgment come upon Jerusalem. Didactic saying
- D. John 9.39 "For judgment came I into this world...". Johannine dialogue.

1. Of all the synoptic material, the I sayings are probably the most uniformly historical.
2. Dodd interprets this as an allegorical statement in miracle form of the rich new order replacing the old. This interpretation is highly strained, and I include the item only because Dodd stresses it.
3. The saying (M) explains a parable, and might be considered in the same unit as the parable itself.

In the above we have evidence from Mark, Q, L, M, and John, brought to us in at least three different literary forms, to establish the fact that Jesus announced judgment. The traditions appear to agree closely.

g. Jesus saw and announced the approaching end of national Judaism.

- A. Matthew 23.28 Lament over Jerusalem; "Behold, your house is left unto you desolate". Didactic saying.
- B. Matthew 23.13-36 "Woe unto you". Didactic saying.
- C. Mark 13.1-2 Stones to be cast down. Didactic saying.
- D. Luke 13.1-5 Gailileans who were executed. Didactic saying (L).
- E. Luke 19.41-44 Enemies shall dash thee to the ground. Didactic saying (L).
- F. Matthew 22.15-22 The tribute money; Jesus took no sides in the political quarrel. Controversial dialogue.
- G. Mark 12.1-9 The husbandmen.¹ Parable.

While the evidence on this point does not cover as wide a variety of literary forms, the sources are quite varied.

h. Jesus taught in contrast to the established religious system of Judaism. He reinterpreted the law without destroying it.

- A. Matthew 21.12-17 Cleansing the temple. Anecdotal saying.
- B. Mark 2.15-17 Eating with sinners. Anecdotal saying.
- C. Mark 2.18-22 New material on old garment;

1. Interpretation of this item is a matter of opinion.

- new wine in old bottles. Didactic saying.
- D. Matthew 23.25-26 Washing the cup. Didactic saying(M).
- E. Matthew 5.17-48 Fulfilling the law. Didactic saying.
- F. Matthew 19.16-22 Rich Ruler. Pedagogic dialogue.
- G. John 7.53-8.11 Adulterous woman. Johannine anecdote.
- H. Mark 1.40-55 Leper cleansed; told to show
himself to the priest and make an
offering. Miracle.
- I. Mark 2.23-28 Sabbath for man. Didactic saying.
- J. Mark 3.16 Healing on the sabbath day. Miracle.
- K. Matthew 19.3ff Divorce reinterpreted. Controversial
dialogue.

On no point in connection with the historical life of Jesus can there be found a greater variety of material, representing so many different forms and sources.

1. Jesus taught the necessity for repentance and faith. Almost all the miracle stories would serve as illustrations under this point. The necessity for faith, or for repentance from the sin which caused infirmity, is a standard item in the miracle form.

- A. Matthew 8.5-13 Centurion's servant Miracle.
- B. Matthew 11.10-24 Woe to Chorazin and
Bethsaida. Didactic saying.
- C. Luke 7.50 "Thy faith hath saved thee". Anecdotal saying.
- D. Luke 13.1-5 Executed Galileans. Didactic saying(L).

E. Luke 13.6-9 Barren fig tree spared. Parable (L).

F. Matthew 17.19-21 Faith as a grain of

mustard seed.

Didactic saying.¹

J. Jesus made a practice of teaching by the sea and in desert places. Some believe that the references on this score are editorial. However, it seems to me they constitute a genuine part of the tradition, even when their purpose is purely connective.

A. Mark 1.45 He could not openly enter a city. Miracle.

B. Matthew 13.1-2 Teaching from a boat.

Introduction
to
parables.²

C. Mark 3.1ff "...withdrew to the sea...; ..that a little boat should wait on him because of the crowd..."

Narrative
anecdote.

D. Mark 5.1ff The Gadarene demoniac; a scene beside the sea.

Miracle.

E. Mark 5.21 Return across the sea; a multitude waits on the shore.

Connective.³

F. Mark 2.13 "...went forth again by the sea side."

Connective.

Other references could be noted, not only in relation to teaching on the seashore, but also to activities in mountains or desert places. Even the connective material, for which

1. In the sequel to a miracle form. 2. There is no reason for these sentences unless they were preserved in conjunction with the parables that follow. 3. The verse might also be viewed as integral to the succeeding miracle form.

there would certainly be no advantage in keeping the setting isolated, bears witness to the fact that Jesus habitually preferred a non-urban environment.

k. Jesus avoided the spectacular, and refused to give signs.

A. Matthew 12.28ff Scribes and Pharisees ask

a sign.

Didactic saying.

B. Matthew 4.1-11 Temptations.

Controversial
dialogue.

C. Mark 8.11-13 Pharisees seek a sign.

Didactic saying.

1. Jesus proclaimed the coming Kingdom of God.

A. Matthew 13.24ff The "Kingdom chapter". Parables.

B. Mark 1.14-15 Beginning of preaching in

Galilee.

Narrative anecdote.

C. Mark 4.26ff The growing seed.

Parable.

D. Matthew 23.13 "Ye shut the Kingdom of

Heaven against...those entering in". Didactic saying.

E. Mark 12.34 "Thou art not from the

Kingdom of God".

Pedagogic dialogue.

F. Luke 10.9-11 "The Kingdom of God is come

nigh unto you".

Didactic saying(1).

It is obvious that one would not look for kingdom evidence in miracle stories. To the early Christians every miracle was tacit evidence for the nearness of the kingdom. Many parables are concerned with this subject, but the material is not confined to parables. It is found in Q, L, and Mark, and

that, while working in the laboratory, he was not only a student but also a teacher. He was not only a student but also a teacher. He was not only a student but also a teacher.

1. James Watson and Francis Crick discovered the structure of DNA in 1953. They proposed the double helix model, which showed that DNA is made of two strands twisted around each other. The strands are made of sugar and phosphate groups, and the bases are attached to the sugar groups.

2. James Watson and Francis Crick discovered the structure of DNA in 1953. They proposed the double helix model, which showed that DNA is made of two strands twisted around each other. The strands are made of sugar and phosphate groups, and the bases are attached to the sugar groups.

3. James Watson and Francis Crick discovered the structure of DNA in 1953. They proposed the double helix model, which showed that DNA is made of two strands twisted around each other. The strands are made of sugar and phosphate groups, and the bases are attached to the sugar groups.

4. James Watson and Francis Crick discovered the structure of DNA in 1953. They proposed the double helix model, which showed that DNA is made of two strands twisted around each other. The strands are made of sugar and phosphate groups, and the bases are attached to the sugar groups.

5. James Watson and Francis Crick discovered the structure of DNA in 1953. They proposed the double helix model, which showed that DNA is made of two strands twisted around each other. The strands are made of sugar and phosphate groups, and the bases are attached to the sugar groups.

6. James Watson and Francis Crick discovered the structure of DNA in 1953. They proposed the double helix model, which showed that DNA is made of two strands twisted around each other. The strands are made of sugar and phosphate groups, and the bases are attached to the sugar groups.

7. James Watson and Francis Crick discovered the structure of DNA in 1953. They proposed the double helix model, which showed that DNA is made of two strands twisted around each other. The strands are made of sugar and phosphate groups, and the bases are attached to the sugar groups.

in almost every literary form except that of miracle.

m. Jesus was recognized by his disciples and the multitudes as a teacher sent from God and especially chosen by God. If one wished to argue that Jesus was recognized as Messiah by his contemporaries, many of the same passages could be used as evidence. Almost all the miracle stories have some influence in this direction.

- | | |
|--|----------------------------------|
| A. Mark 1.9-11 Baptism events. | Narrative anecdote. |
| B. Mark 9.2ff Transfiguration. | Narrative anecdote. ¹ |
| C. Luke 19.29ff Triumphal entry. | Narrative anecdote. ² |
| D. Mark 1.21-34 Man with unclean spirit. Miracle. | |
| E. Mark 5.1-20 Gadarene demoniac; even the demons recognize Jesus. | Miracle. |
| F. Mark 15.39 "Truly this man was the Son of God". | Passion story. |
| G. John 1.43ff Philip's testimony. | Johannine anecdote. |
| H. Matthew 20.20ff Mother of the sons of Zebedee requests favored places for them. | Pedagogic dialogue. ³ |

n. Jesus desired a measure of secrecy, or at least privacy, for his work. The so-called Messiasgeheimnis theory of Mark should not be allowed to eclipse other phases of the

1. Including some dialogue also.

2. Plus material from L.

3. This item also shows some influence of the sayings-form.

gospel tradition at this point. Let us consider the material as a whole.

- A. Mark 7.36 Jesus charges a healed man to
tell no one. Miracle.¹
- B. Matthew 13.10ff He uses parables to confuse
the people. Didactic saying.²
- C. Mark 8.27ff Caesarea Philippi; "...and he
charged them that they tell no
man of him". Narrative anecdote.³
- D. Mark 1.21ff A demon is told not to call him
the "holy One of God". Miracle.
- E. Luke 22.7ff Secrecy in preparation for
the last supper. Passion story.
- F. Mark 7.24 Jesus attempts to find
retirement. Connective.

This process could be used to demonstrate the historicity of many other aspects of the life of Jesus. The above examples are sufficient to show the method. They are significant because they testify to the unity of the tradition. The parables do not show us one Jesus, and the miracles another. Neither is the editor or redactor responsible for our picture of Jesus, for his connective material harmonizes with the sayings. The latter have more evidence for historicity than

1. Exhortation to secrecy is characteristic of many miracle form.
2. I have elsewhere questioned certain aspects of this item.
3. Including some dialogue also.

any other form. The passion story, admittedly the longest form-unit to be assembled at an early date, offers its full share of support. We see everywhere the same Jesus, regardless of contrasts in the source or literary form of the material considered. Each form, if all its units were assembled together, would in itself give a remarkably clear picture of Jesus. Taken together, that picture is concrete, consistent, and uniform.

It may be objected that these aspects of Jesus' life are too general to be of much importance. To this it must be answered that, in order to avoid subjectivity and still demonstrate the method, it was necessary to speak in general terms. Our thesis does not rest on a minute vivisection of the gospel materials. It rests upon a demonstration that those materials are cohesive rather than contradictory. Formgeschichte demonstrates that the synoptic gospels work together to give a vivid and accurate view of the historical Jesus. Moreover, if we can establish the historical trustworthiness of the gospel material in general, then its trustworthiness in detail will be open to little doubt. Lies are notable for their generality; truth for its knowledge of definite detail.

We have sometimes had occasion to contrast what we have called the ipsissimus spiritus and the ipsissima verba of Jesus. We have said that the latter can often be recovered with a degree of assurance, even if not absolute certainty. But of the

ipsissimus spiritus no honest historian can have the slightest doubt. Some one will attack this argument on the basis that it is like the man charged with murder, whose counsel maintained that he was not at the scene of the murder, but even if he had been there the bullet did not come from his gun. It is easy for the prosecution to call such an argument an absurdity. As a matter of fact, it is logical. It has the force of two arguments in one.

We have consistently maintained that there is no history without interpretation. In view of the subjective element involved in historical studies, those who call themselves pure historians are pure only in their own eyes. Moreover, modern biography is reverting to an effort to catch the true spirit of the hero, rather than to amass details about his personal habits. This is just what the evangelists tried to do. They pictured the superb spirituality of Jesus, and the power of his personality. In so doing they reproduced large masses of his actual words -- a characteristic method of their day. They adopted this method because it displayed the ipsissimus spiritus of Jesus himself. The fact that it was their method, and not ours, justifies our unusual confidence in their ability to remember the actual words of Jesus. Apart from this confidence, our contention that the ipsissimus spiritus is more essential than the ipsissima verba is not a means of dodging the issue. Rather, it is in accord with the whole tendency of historical studies.

1. Definition of the term "religion"

2. Definition of the term "religion"

3. Definition of the term "religion"

4. Definition of the term "religion"

5. Definition of the term "religion"

6. Definition of the term "religion"

7. Definition of the term "religion"

8. Definition of the term "religion"

9. Definition of the term "religion"

10. Definition of the term "religion"

11. Definition of the term "religion"

12. Definition of the term "religion"

13. Definition of the term "religion"

14. Definition of the term "religion"

15. Definition of the term "religion"

16. Definition of the term "religion"

17. Definition of the term "religion"

18. Definition of the term "religion"

19. Definition of the term "religion"

20. Definition of the term "religion"

21. Definition of the term "religion"

22. Definition of the term "religion"

23. Definition of the term "religion"

24. Definition of the term "religion"

25. Definition of the term "religion"

D. The gospels have authentic first-century forms.

The fact that our gospels come to us in authentic forms of the first century is the strongest evidence for their trustworthiness. Later in this chapter we shall show the superiority of the gospel forms over the non-canonical and pseudo-gospel writings. But we are now concerned with the gospel material itself. Are the forms characteristic of what we should expect to find in the earliest Christian groups? Are they genuinely primitive?

Lightfoot and others have stressed the growth of the gospel material from so-called "needs and tendencies". Whence came these needs? Or why did these particular tendencies manifest themselves? They came from a desire to know about Jesus. The Christian groups wanted no fairy story. They wanted the truth about their hero. All the gospel forms ring with a conviction that the tradition is true.

There is no doubt about the first-century character of the forms. They are so uniquely primitive that parallels with later rabbinic literature serve only to accentuate the integrity of the gospel forms. The question of date being settled, it is easy to settle the question of motive. The first Christians were not historians of the twentieth century. If we had twentieth-century history in the gospels, it would obviously be a hoax. Then why try to force it into

twentieth-century clothes? First-century history appears best in its own clothes, and the gospels present it that way. They are not the literary forms of a generation interested in theology or allegory. They are the forms of simple, trusting individuals, who did not hesitate to put the facts about their hero into the style of contemporary verbal traditions. In this matter there is a notable unity among the synoptics. This similarity is a strong evidence of validity, for lies are notably dissimilar.

To put the matter another way: We are assured by Paul that there were not many great or mighty ones in the Christian group. Surely the twelve came under Paul's description. This does not mean they were morons; it only means they were commoners. If this was characteristic of the Christian group, would one expect to find its literature replete with complicated phraseology and theological doctrines? No, we would look for just the opposite, namely, simple narratives, remembrance of the hero's own words, and a naïve directness of approach through the door of faith. The gospels offer us just what the character of the earliest Christian groups would lead us to expect. Perhaps the evangelists themselves were above the standard of the group in literary qualifications. Luke certainly occupied such a position. But the unity of group thought, plus the fact that they wrote for others rather than themselves, would be sufficient to require the literary forms to which their readers were accustomed.

Thus the primitive group used primitive forms. What other forms could they use? What other forms would they want to use? The fact that they used forms fitted to their own social background shows that the gospels are no invention of literary hoaxers, but are historically reliable. They answered the need for genuine information about Jesus.

In the discussion of sources we maintained that the real test of gospel historicity is to be found not in comparison of sources, but in an examination of literary forms. What has just been said serves to increase the validity of this view. Our concern is chiefly with the influence of literary form upon truth. If the gospels give evidence of oral tradition, and if oral tradition is admitted to be the only possible bridge between Jesus and the written documents, then the foundation for that bridge has been built. This is the great contribution of *Formgeschichte*. It bridges the historical gap as nothing else can. Indeed, it is a secondary consideration as to just who were the carriers of oral tradition. We assume that, especially in the earlier years, the eyewitnesses were the source of authority. The familiar quotation from Papias¹ assures us that Mark was Peter's interpreter, and that he wrote out of experience and memory. Irenaeus adds that Mark's gospel was composed after the death of Peter and Paul. How do such traditions affect the validity of the *formgeschichtlich* approach? Our answer must,

1. Eusebius, H.E. 3.29.

and can, be consistent with our contention that almost any view of the synoptic origins is compatible with *Formgeschichte*. *Formgeschichte* does not deny the possibility of the Petrine tradition in Mark. Indeed, if one chooses to follow that tradition, the matter is simplified. Peter and Mark then become the dominant carriers of tradition. Others would be concerned, and the entire Christian community would have its influence. But Peter and Mark would be the concentration points about which the units of tradition would cluster like an ellipse about its foci. They would exert a stabilizing influence on the material while in the purely oral stage. They would be in a position to check the validity of the tradition, and could supply many of the details which we have found to be characteristic of the earliest gospel. If one chooses to accept the Papias tradition, his problem is simplified. But his approach to the gospels still requires the *formgeschichtlich* method. Indeed, the method is inescapable in New Testament study.

The bearers of tradition were either the whole community, or the community with Peter and Mark in dominant places. In either case the only forms that could be used were those of the first century. No other forms were known.

Consider, then, any particular form-unit of the gospel material. Our investigation must determine whether, on a basis of the material and the details involved, that unit can find its *Sitz im Leben* only in the life of Jesus. If this

is true, we may regard the historicity of the item as settled. We have already noted a great many cases in which this is true. Let us assume, on the other hand, that it might be possible to find some other Sitz im Leben, or to attribute the unit to the inventiveness of the later community. In this case we must examine the form, and find whether it is characteristic of the most primitive Christian group. If it is, its historical validity is almost as well authenticated as in the previous example.

There is scarcely any form-unit in the Jesus tradition which cannot find its best Sitz im Leben in the life of Jesus himself. When the testimony of form is concurrent, the matter may be regarded as settled. The historicity of an item is demonstrated when the literary form shows its place in the life of the very earliest Christians -- those closest to Jesus, and often eyewitnesses. On the question of date there can be no quarrel. The true gospel forms are so typical of the period from 30 A.D. to 50 A.D. that their Sitz im Leben can be found in the life of Jesus better than anywhere else. Only the inbred skeptic will look elsewhere first.

The primitive Christians were not a group of eccentrics or side-show wonders. They were human people, typical of their own age, living only a few years later than Jesus himself. What would be more natural than to look directly to the life of Jesus for their information about him? There was no

inseparable breach -- no long century of forgetfulness. The information was at hand, and it would be natural to use the forms of literary expression which were also at hand. Thus we would expect to find in the gospels a unity of thought and expression. In this we are not disappointed. Lake, indeed, views this unity with suspicion. He feels that the gospel of Mark shows such complete uniformity of style that it must be due to a particular author. In this way he argues the previous existence of the material only in unwritten form. However, the weight of this argument is slight. If the material lacked unity, some one would surely charge that it was artificial and unreliable. The unity serves to show the actuality of the first-century forms. Growing out of a common milieu they naturally give an appearance of likeness and uniformity. Any other situation would be unsatisfactory from the historical standpoint.

What questions were early Christians asking? How were they answering them? Naturally, they asked and answered questions in the forms typical of their own environment. Formgeschichte has something definite to offer here.

Typical of the questions met by early missionaries were these: Was Jesus really the Messiah? Why did he not announce it in Galilee? What did he say about divorce? A host of such questions about Jesus are answered in the gospels. It has been customary to emphasize the missionary element in this material. But Formgeschichte does not

necessarily assume that the gospels are strictly missionary documents. In many respects they are more suited to religious instruction than to propaganda. Lake chooses to make the missionary element paramount, but he also maintains that the gospels were not written as pure history, and that they reflect particular problems of the early communities. "The weak spot in the Quellenkritik of the nineteenth century was that it studied the gospels as a literary problem rather than as a reflection of early Christian life".¹

On this basis we are justified in our effort to reach back and determine whether the gospel story about Jesus is historically true. This reaching back is not very great in point of time, for the forms of the material are contemporary with the events they recount. Perhaps it would be better to call it a "reaching through" the form units to the events themselves. Did not Paul and the author of Acts show us that the Jesus-experience and the teaching about Jesus were almost as important as Jesus' own words? Then it would be strange if we found no reflection of this in the gospel forms. Indeed, it is strange that we find so little. It is like a thin veil, which, while present, is so transparent that the vision is not impeded. Preaching and missionary purposes had their influence on the choice of forms. But there were only a limited number of forms from which to choose, and only

1. Lake, INT, 18.

certain ones had been used by Jesus himself (e.g., the parable). We must remember that preaching was not the formal thing in the first century that it is today. Indeed, preaching and teaching and missionary work would demand essentially the same literary forms, and the argument as to which aspect dominates the gospels is superficial. We may compare it to the question whether the ethical or the eschatological element of the tradition is dominant in Mark. Lake¹ contends that the ethical element of the pre-literary message has given way in Mark to the eschatological element, which pictures Jesus in a way consistent with the supernatural-saviour-judge view which he believes typical of Acts and the Paulines. Dibelius, on the other hand, thinks that the ethical missionary element is dominant in Mark, and the eschatological teaching is already largely past. Between these two views I will make no decision. If we agree that the literary forms are contemporary with Jesus, and that the gap between Jesus and the written sources is properly bridged by a *formgeschichtlich* view, then it is apparent that both elements were present in the teaching of Jesus himself. If not, why should they both be preserved? From the *formgeschichtlich* viewpoint it becomes apparent that many questions over which authorities have quibbled can be

1. Lake, INT, 22.

left out of the picture. The gospel forms are homogeneous, and it is natural that the aspects of Jesus' life so presented should be broadly homogeneous.

Is Mark chronological? Those of the formgeschichtlich school have sometimes denied it. In this they are not very true to the first assumptions of Formgeschichte. It is the form that matters most. Form is a guide to historicity, but it does not determine chronology. A miracle would be couched in the same form whether it was performed early or late in the life of Jesus. A parable spoken in Galilee would have the same formal characteristics as one spoken two years later in Jerusalem. Thus, from the formgeschichtlich viewpoint, the whole question of chronology falls into a secondary place. Our contention is not that everything happened in exactly the order given in the gospels. Rather, our contention is that it actually did happen. The broad outline of Jesus' life is chronologically correct. Probably the details are also essentially chronological. But exact chronology is not essential to historicity. History is more than a series of dates. Papias realized this when he retained his confidence in the gospels even though Mark wrote "not in order". Historicity is more than

chronological exactness.

When we discover that the gospels are full of typical first-century forms, and when we evaluate the importance of this fact for the historicity of the material, we have gone a long step in the positive direction. Dialogues and miracle stories were common with the Greeks and rabbis. The Jews viewed the biography of a rabbi largely as compilations of his sayings. These extra-Biblical affinities help to verify the impression given by a formgeschichtlich examination of the gospels themselves, namely, that they are based on historical fact.

The following objection may be raised: If the gospels have typical first-century forms, why are they so different from the pseudo-gospels and other first-century writings? This is a valid question. The answer lies in a proper evaluation of the similarities and differences. The former tend to verify the date and the Oriental setting; the latter tend to verify the uniqueness and integrity of the gospels. All human beings have certain characteristics in common, yet each personality offers unique contrasts by which we identify it. In like manner, the gospel forms are what we should expect from the first century, yet can be segregated because of certain characteristics not found elsewhere.

...theological ...

...as a ... the ...

...the ... and ...

...the ... of the ...

...the ... of the ...

...the ... of the ...

...the ... of the ...

...the ... of the ...

...the ... of the ...

...the ... of the ...

...the ... of the ...

...the ... of the ...

...the ... of the ...

...the ... of the ...

...the ... of the ...

...the ... of the ...

...the ... of the ...

...the ... of the ...

...the ... of the ...

...the ... of the ...

...the ... of the ...

...the ... of the ...

E. Unique position of the synoptic gospels.

1. Why Formgeschichte cannot successfully be applied to the Pauline letters, or to Acts and John.

Formgeschichte deals almost entirely with the synoptic gospels. There is a very simple reason for this. The other New Testament writings give little or no evidence of a period of oral tradition or form-unit history. This goes without saying for the Paulines. They were written in the form we now have them -- continuous literary documents, conforming to the type of first-century letters. This continuity is typical also of the general letters, of Hebrews, and of the Revelation. The author of the latter may have taken recourse to earlier documents, but these are so cleverly hidden as to be almost inseparable. Moreover, they lack the historical significance so characteristic of the synoptics. The list is therefore reduced to John and Acts. Here we find contrasts to the synoptics, demonstrating that the documents are not suitable material for form-geschichtlich investigation, but at the same time shedding light on our problem.

We have elsewhere mentioned the relationship between the so-called kerygma, or nucleus of early Christian preaching as reconstructed from the Paulines and Acts, and the synoptics. We had occasion to criticize the emphasis

put upon the non-synoptic material by Charles H. Dodd, in his effort to reconstruct the core of early Christian preaching. Such an emphasis is derived from an implication that the synoptics cannot be historically trustworthy, plus the notion that Paul's missionary method accurately reflected the theology of the whole primitive church. Neither assumption is historically established. The term *kerygma* is derived from Paul's use of the word in I Cor. 1.21, 2.4, 15.14 and Rom. 16.25. The corresponding verb is used in Gal. 2.2 and other references. Dodd infers that all early Christian preaching was only the "public proclamation of Christianity to the non-Christian world".¹ According to this view preaching was only proclamation -- not ethical teaching or exhortation concerning the standards of a Christian life. "For the early church, then, to preach the Gospel was by no means the same thing as to deliver moral instruction or exhortation. While the church was concerned to hand on the teaching of the Lord, it was not by this that it made converts. It was by kerygma, says Paul, not by didaché, that it pleased God to save men".² Surely this is a strain upon Paul's terminology and upon the facts. Did Paul lack ethical interest? When he proclaimed Jesus did he only repeat in parrot-like fashion "that Christ died for our sins according to the scriptures; and that he was buried; and that he hath been raised on the

1. Dodd, AP, 4.

2. Dodd, AP, 6.

third day according to the scriptures; and that he appeared to Cephas; then to the twelve; then he appeared to about five hundred brethren at once, of whom the greater part remain until now, but some are fallen asleep; then he appeared to James; then to all the apostles; and last of all, as to the child untimely born, he appeared to me also"¹ Such preaching must have been very unconvincing. No wonder his listeners sometimes fell asleep. Indeed, why should such preaching last until midnight? Even if he delivered only what he had himself received,² he must have received more than this. The proclamation of a skeleton outline of Jesus' life cannot be separated from Paul's ethical demands. Greek non-Christians would need quotation and ethical argumentation, to persuade them that these things happened according to some "scriptures" foreign to themselves. Dodd concludes that "The Pauline Kerygma, therefore, is a proclamation of the facts of the death and resurrection of Christ in an eschatological setting which gives significance to the facts".³ As proof of the eschatological setting reference is made to II Cor. 5.10, Rom. 2.16, I Cor. 4.5. "It is to be observed that in these passages the fact of judgment is appealed to as a datum of faith. It is not something for which Paul argues, but something from which he argues".⁴ In other words, all beyond

1. I Cor. 15.3-7.

2. I Cor. 15.3.

3. Dodd, AP, 17.

4. Dodd, AP, 16.

the bare outline-statement of Christ's birth, work, death, resurrection, and Messiahship -- these are Paul's gospel but not kerygma. Such an idea is ridiculous. It assumes that practically all Paul's correspondence has nothing to do with the essentials of primitive Christianity, but is the overflowing of Paul's brain. When he says that those who preach any other gospel should be anathema,¹ does he refer to some other skeleton outline or kerygma? It is manifestly impossible. As to the birth, life, death, resurrection, and Messiahship of Jesus every Christian was agreed. If that was the entire preaching, there could be no other gospel. Paul, it is true, built part of his own philosophical superstructure. But that superstructure must have been based upon more than the kerygma as found in I Cor. 15. Paul had an authority for his moral and ethical demands beyond his own opinion. Christianity was never for him merely a matter of assent to some formal pronouncement. The test of whether a certain man was to remain in the Christian society was not his assent to such a pronouncement, but his cessation of incest. When Paul went up to Jerusalem,² he certainly discussed with those "of repute" more than an outline of the kerygma as found in I Cor. 15.

Paul built upon a surprisingly extensive knowledge of Jesus and his teaching. Even though he may not quote the

1. Gal. 1.10.

2. Gal. 2.

sayings traditions, he has "a word from the Lord", and makes it the touchstone of his own advice. "The Christ-centered Christianity of Paul is therefore neither a branch nor a sophistication of the gospel of Jesus".¹ "His gospel was truly the gospel of Jesus".² Jesus was greater than Paul, and the gospels are greater than Paul's letters. The gospel tradition, indeed, is earlier than Paul's writings. If we want to reconstruct the true kerygma, the core of primitive Christian preaching, Paul's letters are not the place to look for it. We should look in the gospels themselves. Paul tested himself by Jesus, and we ought to test the Paulines by the synoptic gospels. It is only in the latter that the extent and beauty of the preaching about Jesus is truly reproduced.

When Acts is compared to the synoptics, we reach a similar conclusion. We seek in vain for a consistent *formgeschichtlich* approach to Acts. I maintain this in spite of many such statements as the following: "It may be remarked that the processes of writing of Luke-Acts were the same throughout the two volumes. The Acts section, no less than the gospel section, was produced by the selection and use of so and so many pericopes which had arisen as had the gospel materials".³ Surely Mr. Riddle has entirely forgotten the "We sections". Also, he has failed to make a close literary

1. Deissmann, *Paul*, 258.

2. Helm, *AP*, 130.

3. Riddle, *CLL*, 105.

comparison of the two documents. There is no *formgeschichtlich* evidence for the statement quoted above. Moreover, the doublets in Paul's speeches in Acts, which Riddle tries to compare to doublets in the synoptics, present a unique phenomenon. They give possible testimony to a stereotyped report of Paul's conversion, but they lack all other characteristics which are necessary to a *formgeschichtlich* investigation of literature.

The only clearly established form in Acts is that of the speeches. Among these, indeed, there is a similarity. Whether the speeches are correctly reported or artificially invented, they bear a likeness to one another. Peter and Stephen touch the same high spots in the story of Jesus. Dodd discovers in this material a basis for his reconstruction of the kerygma. But the more or less artificial speeches in Acts ought not to prejudice us against a normal view of Luke's material in the gospel.

If Christian preaching was confined to the items included in Peter's speeches, why should Luke have had access to, much less sought to preserve, the gospel material? This is an important question, since the author or compiler of both works is generally admitted to have been the same man (either Luke or another). The gospel forms are natural, beautiful, and varied; the speeches in Acts are distressingly similar, and almost stilted. The lengthy historical reviews of Israel, important as they may be, seem to be

artificially built to fit a standard speech form. In this respect they offer a contrast to the synoptic sayings-forms.

The Jesus-sayings of the synoptics are not comparable in form to the self-testimonial-historical speeches attributed to Paul in Acts. Every probability favors the essential historicity of these speeches -- but the form is so different from the synoptic sayings that Formgeschichte can derive neither help nor hindrance from them. We are led to conclude that Jesus had his own characteristic forms, just as Paul may have done, and that the two were different. On the point of historicity, the Jesus forms are more commendable than the speeches in Acts. Again, Acts must be tested by the gospels, not vice versa. What Jesus said or did was more important to early Christians than what Paul or Peter did. Listeners would make an effort to remember the actual words of Jesus, but there is no reason to suppose that the words of Peter would be so revered.

In conclusion, there is a mass of evidence to show that the tradition in Acts is much later than that in the synoptics. Some of these considerations are as follows:

a. In Acts Peter favors the crucifixion for theological reasons, whereas the synoptics tell of his opposition expressed at Caesarea Philippi.

b. There is an almost full-grown Christian theology in Acts. In Peter's speeches we see Jesus approved of God,

fulfiller of prophecy, raised from the dead, greater than David, hailed as Lord and Christ. God will "call unto him" those from outside Judaism.¹ The Holy Spirit can, if one desires, be construed theologically. Baptism is a thoroughly developed Christian institution; Peter mentions it in his speech, and the people understand what he is talking about. There is no vivid use of apocalypse, indicating that the idea was already beginning to wane, and that the tradition did not reach back to a date as early as that of the synoptics. The superiority of Jesus is claimed not on a basis of his own work and personality, but on a theological, almost apologetic, basis.

c. There is, as already noted, no synoptic parallel to the long speeches of Peter, Stephen and Paul. These constitute a large percentage of Acts. Any rabbi could write Stephen's speech, but the gospels indicate that Jesus had distinctive forms of his own.

d. The few brief² anecdotes in Acts are anecdotes only, and have no significance for either the kerygma or the life of Jesus. An example of this type is the story of Ananias and Sapphira. We must always remember that anecdotes exist in countless forms without regard to historicity.

e. The strongest evidence for a primitive tradition in

1. Acts 2.39.

2. Most of them are long.

Acts is found in the belief in miracles,³ the use of Old Testament proof-texts, and the lack of an immediate break from the temple tradition. However, these are not matters of form. On the latter score the evidence of Acts is quite wanting. All we can say is that Acts shows definite evidence of what Bultmann and Kundsinn try to find in the gospels, namely, the strong influence of church organization and theology. We have elsewhere seen that the search for such influence in the synoptics is unrewarding.

f. Assuming that Luke was responsible for both the third gospel and Acts, we can best reconstruct a picture of Luke as a literary man from Acts. It better describes its author, showing him to be a Hellenistic Greek, a literary man, and a lover of speeches. This is just what we would expect. We must remember that Luke's authorship played a smaller part in the gospel, because of the large dependence on Q and the use of form-units from existing tradition. Such an explanation of the differences between the third gospel and Acts is much better than the usual recourse to intervening time or changing attitudes. Acts shows the man who wrote it; the gospels show Jesus.

For these reasons it is obvious that Formgeschichte cannot be applied to Acts, and that Acts contributes little to formgeschichtlich study of the synoptics. The latter stand by themselves.

1. E.g., Peter's shadow heals.

In the case of John, while we are dealing with gospel material and the life of Jesus, the situation is not much better for Formgeschichte. The fourth gospel is not adapted to the formgeschichtlich approach. It is sometimes said that John has more "interpretation". It would be better to say that the author of John is more prominent. He clearly discloses his own personality. We can see that he is a Hellenistic Jew, acquainted with the Alexandrian method. The mystical experience is very real to him, yet his work is essentially controversial. There is a lack of the compiler-method which is so pronounced in the synoptics. "Thus it is misleading to speak of all the Gospels as linked together in the same succession, and to assume that in Mark we must look for all the characteristics which we find in John. By an assumption of this kind we miss the true significance alike of the Synoptic Gospels and of the Fourth".¹

Howard and others have made much of the supposed derangements of text in John. Such derangements, if actual, are evidence that the fourth gospel has a definite sense of authorship, an interruption of which is discernible. The large amount of interpretation reflects a late date and considerable theological development. In John the Bultmann-Kundsin theory of church influence actually has working ground. The facts appear on every hand. As Taylor has put it, "The Fourth Gospel offers a much less promising field, because the

1. Scott, VGR, 53.

material in that Gospel has more obviously passed through a process of development in which Christian experience and literary purposes have played their part".¹ Oral tradition has worn itself out. Literary standards have taken its place. Interest no longer lies in knowing what Jesus said about a certain problem, but in what the church has said about Jesus and that problem. This does not mean that John lacked good sources. It merely means that he failed to separate fact from opinion and theology. "Like the other Evangelists, the Fourth Evangelist uses earlier sources, but he puts his own stamp upon everything he uses to such an extent that literary analysis can achieve little in the task of reconstruction".² A good example of this is found in the story of feeding the multitude, an item which happens to occur in both Mark and John.³ John's additions have a significance more theological than historical. The time is established as when "the passover, the feast of the Jews, was at hand". Jesus' inquiry of Philip is for the purpose of testing him. The miracle is definitely spoken of as a "sign", so powerful that the crowd seeks to make him king. Another case in point is a comparison of John 15.20ff with Matthew 10.24. Here a brief text of Matthew is made a sermon by John.

John offers striking parallels in vocabulary and style to the Ginta of the Mandaeans, or to the old Russian form of

1. Taylor, FGT, 22.

2. Taylor, FGT, 53.

3. Mk. 6.31-46; Jn. 6.1-15.

Josephus. There are no pronouncement stories in the strictest sense of the word -- only extended controversies and dialogues. In John these are usually allegorical, indicating the ever-present hand of an author-interpreter. Even in the closest parallels, the saying of Jesus is not brief and self-sufficient as in the synoptics. The synoptic miracle form has been replaced by examples which more closely resemble some of the non-canonical miracles. We see the miraculous power of a wonder-worker, not the healing of faith. This indicates a definite development in Christology. The greatest point in favor of John, indeed, is the abundance of poetic forms and parallelisms.¹ Burney claims that these are even more numerous than in the Synoptics, and are sufficient to establish the genuineness and integrity of the Johannine material. But from the standpoint of Formgeschichte, the poetic element alone is not sufficient evidence.

Dodd points out that in John, while theology plays a larger part on the whole, the crudities of early eschatology are gone.² He endeavors to argue that the Johannine story follows the kerygma of Acts more closely than do the synoptics. If this is true (which is difficult to show), it is a point against John rather than in his favor, for we have already shown the sketchy and altogether unsatisfactory nature of the kerygma in Acts as a basis for first-century Christian

1. Burney, PL, 84ff.

2. Cf. Jn. 11.24-26, 14.16-19.

preaching. Indeed, Acts and John are alike in that both come from a period decidedly later than the synoptic tradition. Such items as the prologue, mention of Baptism in Holy Spirit, and the view of Jesus' death as his crowning glory -- these give evidence of a **theological** origin entirely different from the simple, direct form-units which constitute the bulk of the synoptic tradition.

1

F. C. Burkitt expressed the same thought when he wrote, "The question that the scientific investigator has to ask is not why so much of our material seems to be, strictly speaking, unhistorical, but how it comes to pass that any real historical memory of Jesus Christ was preserved. It is easy enough to explain the genesis of the Creed, and the existence and general scope of such a document as the Fourth Gospel. The real problem is the survival of the Gospel according to Mark".

We have now verified our original contention, namely, that the synoptic gospels stand by themselves. Formgeschichte finds itself confined almost entirely to the synoptic material. It builds the bridge which spans those earliest years, during and immediately after the crucifixion, when the original and purest tradition about Jesus was being formed.

1. Burkitt, SLJ, 10.

2. Comparisons between the synoptic gospels and uncanonical writings.

Under the discussion of sources, we referred to supposed rabbinic and Greek analogies to the New Testament material. These were mentioned because they sometimes seem to parallel the gospel forms. It was shown that these parallels are, for the most part, of little importance. Certain likenesses are sufficient to suggest the *formgeschichtlich* method, but the uncanonical material offers almost no help on the problem of gospel historicity.

If we compare the gospel material with uncanonical material and the pseudo-gospels in general, we sometimes find both a different set of literary forms and a different outlook on historical matters. In other cases, however, the forms are comparable. We cannot resort to individual bits of didactic or proverbial speech. Such items are valueless when we try to compare literary forms. Every preacher uses proverbs. We must seek larger units. For example, the following is given as a rabbinic parallel to the paradigm or anecdotal sayings-form: "An incident concerning a non-Jew who came before Shammai. He said to him: 'Make me a proselyte under the condition that thou teachest me the whole Torah while I stand on one leg'. Thereupon he repulsed him with a rod which he had in his hand. He came before Hillel. He made him a proselyte. He said to him: 'What thou hatest

1. The following tables are given for the purpose of illustrating the method of calculation.

Table 1. The distribution of the number of children in families.

Table 2. The distribution of the number of children in families, by sex.

Table 3. The distribution of the number of children in families, by age.

Table 4. The distribution of the number of children in families, by race.

Table 5. The distribution of the number of children in families, by education.

Table 6. The distribution of the number of children in families, by occupation.

Table 7. The distribution of the number of children in families, by religion.

Table 8. The distribution of the number of children in families, by marital status.

Table 9. The distribution of the number of children in families, by income.

Table 10. The distribution of the number of children in families, by housing.

Table 11. The distribution of the number of children in families, by duration of residence.

Table 12. The distribution of the number of children in families, by birth order.

Table 13. The distribution of the number of children in families, by sex of first child.

Table 14. The distribution of the number of children in families, by sex of second child.

Table 15. The distribution of the number of children in families, by sex of third child.

Table 16. The distribution of the number of children in families, by sex of fourth child.

Table 17. The distribution of the number of children in families, by sex of fifth child.

Table 18. The distribution of the number of children in families, by sex of sixth child.

Table 19. The distribution of the number of children in families, by sex of seventh child.

Table 20. The distribution of the number of children in families, by sex of eighth child.

Table 21. The distribution of the number of children in families, by sex of ninth child.

Table 22. The distribution of the number of children in families, by sex of tenth child.

Table 23. The distribution of the number of children in families, by sex of eleventh child.

do not to thy neighbour. This is the whole Torah, and all else is its interpretation. Go, learn'¹". This is a good sayings-form because the whole importance of the anecdote is bound up with the final words of Hillel. In these words he summarizes a general truth. Moreover, the form is obviously intended to honor the hero. Is this a historical incident? So far as the form is concerned, it may be. There is nothing in the form to deny it, and the direct simplicity of narration is favorable. This is the same argument that we have frequently used in connection with gospel units. The fact that the "silver rule" of Hillel is comparable to the golden rule of Jesus should not militate against the historicity of either item. We must allow that men may express a common thought in various ways without consciously copying one another.

Some very interesting parallels may be quoted from Pirke Aboth. The following is a sort of parable, noted by Bultmann: "Be not like servants who serve their master under the condition that they receive a reward, but rather like servants who serve their master under the condition that they receive no reward"². This immediately brings to mind Lk. 17.7-10. The general thought is the same. But as far as the parable element is concerned, the Pirke Aboth item should not be called a parable in the gospel sense. Lk. 17.7-10 actually tells a story of a man who had a servant working

1. Fiebig, EE, 102.

2. Pirke Aboth I.3, in Bultmann, GT, 218.

in the fields, coming into the house, and preparing supper. This is a parable of the typical Jesus type. Only the last verse is really kin to the non-Biblical quotation. Such a comparison tells us only that the idea of an unprofitable servant was not the sole property of one individual. The gospel item has gospel form. This is in favor of its historicity. In the case of the non-gospel item, literary form makes no contribution at all.

A similar comparison has been drawn between the House ¹ on a Rock and Pirké Aboth III.18: "Every one whose wisdom is greater than his deeds, to whom is he like? To a tree which has many branches, but whose roots are few; and the wind comes and uproots it and overturns it. But every one whose deeds are greater than his wisdom, to whom is he like? To a tree which has few branches, and whose roots are many, so that, even if all winds in the world should come and blow upon it, it could not be moved away from its place". This example shows how the imagination will stretch, when one is searching for literary parallels to the gospel material. A close examination will show that the only parallels are in the notion of stability versus instability, and in the mention of winds. The forms, as such, are quite different except for the element of simile. The excerpt from Matthew is a typical gospel parable -- a real story about possible individuals. "Every one therefore ... shall be likened unto

1. Mt. 7.24-27.

a wise man, who built....." In the non-Biblical item the matter is not so concretely expressed, nor is the character so firmly drawn. It is a simile, but not a true parable. Indeed, it is practically impossible to find a genuine ancient parable form outside the gospels themselves.

The miracle stories have been said to have extra-Biblical parallels. Let us examine some of these. In Josephus,¹ Eleazer drives out a demon by the use of a ring, with which he pulls the demon out the nose of the sufferer. In other non-canonical stories the demon is made to overturn a basin of water, or a statue, or otherwise show that he has physically withdrawn from the victim. Such magical crudities are entirely lacking in the gospel forms, with the possible exception of the swine in the Gadarene incident.

The following is a miracle story about Apollonius of Tyana: "A girl had died just in the hour of her marriage, and the bridegroom was following her bier lamenting as was natural his marriage left unfulfilled, and the whole of Rome was mourning with him, for the maiden belonged to a consular family. Apollonius then, witnessing their grief, said: 'Put down the bier, for I will stay the tears that you are shedding for this maiden'. And withal he asked what was her name.... Merely touching her and whispering in secret some spell over her, (he) at once woke up the maiden from her seeming death; and the girl spoke out loud and returned to her

1. Josephus, Antiquities 8.2,5.

father's house, just as Alcestis did when she was brought back to life by Hercules".¹ As compared to the gospel miracle forms we may make the following comments: A. Certain aspects of the forms are alike, e.g., there is physical verification of the miracle. B. The gospel element of faith, so characteristic of Jesus' miracles, is entirely lacking in the Apollonius incident. C. In its place is a heightened form of magic. We see Apollonius "whispering in secret some spell over her....". D. Instead of an appeal to the miracle worker by some needy person (as in the gospels), the uncanonical stories usually show the miracle worker as a magician looking for good chances to amaze the crowd.

Another story about Apollonius recounts that, when the people in Ephesus were suffering pestilence, he urged the crowd to stone a strange beggar. The crowd, pitying the helpless old man, at first declined to obey. But Apollonius urged them on, convincing them by the fire in the victim's eyes that he was really a demon. After the man lay dead under a heap of stones, Apollonius said, "Take away the stones and discover the wild beast you have killed".² They lifted the stones, and found the body of a great dog, foaming at the mouth like mad.

Now, if the first story is quoted as a parallel to the raising of the Widow's Son, the second also deserves to be

1. Philostratus, Vita Apollonii, 4.45, translated by Conybeare.
 2. Philostratus, Vita Apollonii, 4.10, translated by Conybeare.

quoted as an indication of how far afield from the gospel style the Apollonius stories really went. In the latter story there is no form, other than that of any well written story. In comparison with the gospel, it is decidedly verbose. The Apollonius story was originated by Philostratus, on the memoranda of Damis of Nineveh, for the purpose of raising in the second century a sort of competitor to Jesus, based on Neo-Pythagoreanism. It shows that, even when trained authors were trying to imitate the gospels and excel them along their own lines, the result fell to a historical level far below the gospels. They resorted to invention. They could not make a substitute with the literary purity of the original.

Similar statements could be made about Lucian's Life of Demonax, that imaginative picture of the happy-go-lucky philosopher, so different from Jesus, obviously written as a satire on Jesus. Demonax was the kind of teacher who would appeal to the Graeco-Roman world. Every one loved him. He could sleep in any house he wished, and was always welcome. He lived a happy life, and died a comfortable and honorable death -- all of which Jesus failed to do. Here was a hero made to order, according to the Greek pattern. In contrast, the gospels stand out as history written to tell facts, rather than imagination run riot to please popular fancy. "And here once more it appears how alien was the evangelic portraiture from the ideal of that generation, how remote from its

imagination".¹ It is this very fact, namely, that there is something unique about the gospel forms and the story they tell, which establishes them as historical in comparison with the literary inventions of contemporary writers. The gospels are not the work of a philosopher like Lucian. They are the remembered facts about a religious leader, preserved by his followers because they fulfilled a popular need.

A comparison of the synoptics with the pseudo-gospels will not fare much better. These writings, being later than the synoptics, are well out of the period when oral tradition would effectively retain facts. They represent a stage when theology and imagination had played havoc with the historicity of the material. Indeed, this is a unique asset of the synoptics. They were late enough that the grain had been sifted from the chaff, but still early enough that the grain had not been contaminated or destroyed. The impress of actual reminiscence is stamped upon them everywhere. This is not true of the apocryphal gospels. Moreover, the Aramaic influence is notably lacking in the later efforts, while the Greek philosophical and theological influence is in the ascendancy. The fact that the synoptics were so carefully preserved bespeaks their primacy in the field. There were other gospels, but none of them had an equal claim to survival. They show how, after the period of the synoptics, mythology invaded the tradition on every hand. By the time of Justin

1. David Smith, The Historic Jesus, 54.

it is recorded that fire flashed from the Jordan during the baptism of Jesus.¹ Ignatius theologizes that "He was baptised in order that he might cleanse the water through his sufferings",² and the twenty-fourth Ode of Solomon sets a cosmic background in which a dove sings over the anointed while fear and dread of death make the world tremble.³ If one chooses to see a mythological element already at work in the synoptic stories of the baptism, he must admit that it worked within very narrow bounds as compared with later writings.

We elsewhere discuss the difference between the miracle forms in the synoptics and in, for example, the Gospel of Thomas. David Smith has said about this writing, "It is a tissue of Dohetic legends of the Child Jesus, and it depicts Him as a veritable Wunderkind".⁴ For example, as the child Jesus was passing through a village street he was jostled by another boy, at which he became incensed and said, "So finish thou thy course". Immediately the boy fell dead. Jesus was a source of fear to all the neighbors, and they complained to Joseph, "It is not right that such a child should be among us.... Depart out of this place; and if thou must be with us, teach him to pray and not to blaspheme: for our sons are put to death by him".⁵ These complainers

1. Tryphon, 28.3.

2. Eph. 18.2.

3. See Dibelius, TG, 273.

4. David Smith, The Historic Jesus, 35.

5. Gospel of Thomas V,1.

immediately became blind, and walked about without knowing where they were. Even while an infant, Jesus had supreme knowledge. When five years old he became a teacher to his first teacher; shortly afterward he struck dead another teacher, who had dared to punish him. He was not only an omnipotent child, but a very spoiled one. There is nothing in the whole Gospel of Thomas comparable to the synoptics either in literary form or in content. It is Docetic throughout.

Another example is the Protevangelium Jacobi, which is the story of Mary and purports to be written by James the brother of Jesus. It is a theological concoction throughout, and is directed against the Docetic claim that Jesus came into being through normal parenthood. It also opposes the Jewish accusation that he was the illegitimate son of the soldier Panthera.¹ In the former issue it contends that Joseph was an aged widower when he became Mary's guardian (she being only twelve years of age). Against the latter Mary's perpetual virginity is maintained, the brothers of Jesus being Joseph's children by a former marriage.

Not quite so extreme are the remnants of the Gospel according to the Hebrews. Clement of Alexandria, Origen, Eusebius, and Jerome, all refer to it. Accordingly its content must not have been greatly foreign to the synoptics. Yet there was a strongly theological tendency, even to the

1. Cf. Origen, against Celsus, I.28,32.

point of dogmatizing. At the time of baptism Jesus himself mentions his sinlessness; he is characterized as the first-born Son of the Holy Spirit, and the abiding place of the Spirit. The Holy Spirit conveys Jesus to Mount Tabor by a single hair of his head. After the resurrection, his first appearance is to James (as might be expected in view of the Jewish preference for James, even though it contradicts both Pauline and synoptic tradition).

The Gospel of Peter is said by Eusebius to be outside the realm of general recognition.¹ In addition to its Docetic views of the passion and resurrection (the main part of the writing now extant), its claim to come from the Apostle Peter is alone sufficient to invalidate its historicity.

A vast amount of similar material could be cited. After the production of Matthew and Luke the gospel material, so faithfully preserved by tradition, was rapidly bent to all sorts of theological and sectarian purposes. The whole group of Apocryphal Gospels, or even all the extra-canonical writings put together, make almost no valid addition to the content of the New Testament. They are "the result of working over the canonical Gospels or the sources used by them, in conformity to sectarian or heretical tendencies".² Some items are possibly taken from the primitive tradition, but they make no contribution to our knowledge of the historical Jesus.

1. Eusebius, Hist. Eccl., III, 3.

2. Jülicher, Einleitung in das Neue Testament, 301.

The difference is not in the artistic superiority of the gospels -- in this respect the imaginative portrayals and clever theologizing of the apocryphals are sometimes superior. Rather, the difference is in historicity. From the standpoint of pure Formgeschichte the contrast is especially striking. The forms of the synoptics are definite, clear-cut; something we can analyze, talk about, and use. The forms of the apocryphals are hazy, imaginative, often far-fetched, and fitted to theological dogma rather than the preservation of historical truth. In most cases there are no "form units" in the apocryphal gospels. They are connected narratives or stories, not clear-cut units of tradition. We could not apply Formgeschichte to them even if we tried.

3. Result of these comparisons.

In conclusion we may say that Formgeschichte is an eminently successful method of studying the historicity of the synoptic material. But as applied to other literature of the ancient period, Formgeschichte is either a failure or a bungler's tool. Up to the time when the synoptics were written, the tradition (whether oral or written, or both) had retained its primitive form. Thereafter it rapidly lost this form. Formgeschichte can rightly be applied only to

the synoptics. They stand by themselves as the sole source of reliable knowledge about the historical Jesus.

Our task is to reach back of Mark. The older method sought to do this by a system of minute literary comparisons, discovering just what the later evangelists had copied from Mark, reconstructing Q, etc.. This led to a discussion of Ur-Marcus, Proto-Luke, and other supposed written sources. But *Formgeschichte* has reached back farther than this. It has covered the dark period from 30 A.D. until the first written sources came into being. We see how trustworthy accounts of the historical Jesus were retained until the time of the synoptics. As Lake says of *Formgeschichte*, "Its most solid and undoubted achievement is that it has brought more imagination into the question and reminded us of the actual conditions of the period between the Passion and the writing of the gospels".¹ This imagination is not an exploit of wishful thinking, but a real clue to the better understanding of the gospel tradition. Although some would say that tradition is too flexible to trust, we have learned that the opposite is true. Popular tradition preserved the facts naturally, in simplest literary form, far from the artificiality found in the apocryphals. The fact that it was popular tradition is just what makes it trustworthy. Its uniform use guaranteed its historicity. In those early years the truth was not dissipated. It would have been different if the

1. Lake, INT, 20.

period of oral tradition had covered two hundred years. Then, indeed, folk-tendencies and theology might have almost destroyed it. But Formgeschichte demonstrates that, for a period of thirty or thirty-five years, tradition was the ideal method of preserving what was worth preserving and forgetting what was not. The time was essentially short -- too short for the material to stagnate, and not too long for historical accuracy.

It is a mistake to think of Paul as a higher development than the gospels. It is true that he shows an advance in theology and speculation, even though his work was earlier than the canonical Mark. How does this influence our view of Formgeschichte and the gospel tradition? Answer: Formgeschichte bridges the gap, and restores the gospels to their rightfully pre-eminent place, both in historical importance and in priority of time. We must think of the gospels not as a product of 70 A.D., but as a product of the years 30 A.D. to 40 A.D..

F. Formgeschichte testifies to the dominant historical place of the Jesus-element in early Christian experience. The material finds its proper Sitz im Leben in the life of the historical Jesus.

Formgeschichte is a new method of literary study. Every such method must have a point of view in order to interpret its findings. The value of a method depends upon

the validity of this point of view. Consider, for example, the attitudes of several men in the field of Formgeschichte. Dibelius interprets everything in the light of "preaching" -- a sort of touchstone which he has derived from his notion of the dominant place of preaching in the formation of the early tradition. In other words, Dibelius does not put the tradition first; he puts preaching first, and will not consider the tradition itself except in relation to preaching.

Bultmann interprets everything in the light of "Gemeindeleben"¹ and the place of tradition in church history. He will approach the tradition from no other angle. Bertram finds his touchstone in the cultus and the practice of cultic formulas, without which he will not allow any tradition to exist. By this means he destroys the historical value of the tradition.

The Sitz im Leben which a critic gives to the material becomes, from the formgeschichtlich viewpoint, a crucial thing. Fiebig prefers, instead of Sitz im Leben, the term "Zusammenhang mit dem Leben".² He has in mind the relationship, not merely to the Christian community as Bultmann, but to the non-Christian community as well. The Christian tradition constantly invaded this outside world. Christianity could not exist apart from contact with Roman, Greek, and Oriental thought, yet "above all Jesus and his disciples were filled with the thought and expression forms of the rabbis".³

1. That is, life in the Christian community.
 2. That is, relationship to life.
 3. Fiebig, FGJ, 23.

Thus Fiebig, too, has a touchstone in the popular and universal elements of Jewish life. This comes close to the point, but without going farther Fiebig would scarcely have escaped the fault of his predecessors, about whom he said that each pretended he had studied the whole problem while in reality he had only described a special Sitz im Leben which he thought best fitted to the gospel material.¹ Fiebig does escape this error when he says that the true "Zusammenhang mit dem Leben" is to be found in the life of Jesus. Here is the secret of all success with the formgeschichtlich method -- to recognize that the gospel material is most historical, most understandable, and most at home when we find its Sitz im Leben in the life of Jesus himself. To the early Christians it was not preaching, church history, Hellenism, Orientalism, or cultus that mattered. It was Jesus that mattered!

The evidence of Jewish method and the reliability of oral tradition also point in this direction. We should exhaust every means to give the material a valid historical setting in Jesus' own life, before we look outside that life to account for it. To some critics this would appear unscientific, or lacking in historical method. As a matter of fact, it is the only method historical science has ever known. Given a body of material, we try to orient that material in an environment which is natural, and which aids rather than hinders the interpretation. Given the gospels, we must place

1. Fiebig, FGJ, 46.

them in the environment of Jesus' own life in order to interpret them adequately. To list them as inventions of cultic or community activity is not historical criticism -- it is historical destruction.

1. Evidence from the gospels themselves.

There is one theme which runs through the gospels from start to finish. That is the Jesus-theme. It sets the gospels apart from all other literature -- even gives them a place superior to the other New Testament literature. It is the height of folly to divorce this material from the trait which is everywhere evident upon its face. If Jesus were mentioned occasionally, or only now and then, we might reasonably look outside his life for a Sitz im Leben whereby to approach the material. But the gospel units are all Jesus-units, except the few which relate to John and the genealogies (both of which are allowed in the gospels, in the final analysis, only because of their relation to the strictly Jesus-material).

Jesus was no mere appendage of theology. He was the center of Christian interest and Christian experience. It was perfectly normal that the story of his life should be preserved with utmost care and fidelity. This is what makes the work of Dodd seem so strange to us. When he wants to know what early Christians were saying about the historical Jesus, he

resorts not to the storehouse of gospel material, but to the labored hints of Acts and the Paulines.

2. Evidence in Acts and the Pauline letters.

Acts and the Paulines are also Jesus documents, though they deal with world relationships rather than the life of Jesus. They cannot be interpreted in any other light. The Jesus-experience at Pentecost was essentially the same as before Pentecost; the Holy Spirit of Acts is none other than the indwelling spirit of Jesus. The koinonia was not merely a koinonia of Christian believers -- it was a koinonia with Jesus himself. The Jesus-experience held the primitive church together, and on any other basis it would have collapsed for want of cohesiveness.

If there was any missionary preaching at all, its theme was Jesus. The gospels are his biography. But if we find in them a measure of interpretation, it means only that the Jesus-element of Christian experience existed as a vital part of life, not a thing theoretical or apart. The experience of the spiritual Jesus was grounded in knowledge of the historical Jesus.

Acts and the Paulines offer evidence to this conclusion, even though the setting is different. In Acts the criterion as to whether one is a Christian is this: What does he believe about Jesus? What attitude does he take? For Paul the

criterion was the same; to be "in Christ" required a certain attitude. Was Jesus' death a tragic ending of an unsuccessful life? No, it was the glorious ending of a life planned by God. How one viewed the life of Jesus was the criterion of Christian loyalty, even of Christian identity. Paul's Christ was the historical Jesus. He was careful not to let the two get separated; he did not represent Christ as something later and apart from the earthly Jesus. In other words, the entire New Testament gives evidence of a dominant spiritual continuity, which was centered in the Jesus-element from the very first, and was never centered elsewhere. To express this fact in theological terms would require the coining of a new word. It is not enough to talk about "Christology", because this is so easily identified with the Jesus-Christ controversy. The term we need is "Jesusology". If we grant that the gospels evince any theological interest whatever, this is the only satisfactory word to describe it.

P. G. S. Hopwood upholds the following general conclusions,¹ all of which are in accord with the point of view we have just established. A. The emergence of the Christian church was not a process which can be separated from the experience of the historical Jesus by the first believers. The disciples had found a religious experience in their personal contact with Jesus, and this became a vital inheritance of the church. B. The Christian church was

1. in The Religious Experience of the Primitive Church.

neither a mere Jewish movement, nor later a hodge-podge of Hellenistic influences working on a minimum of fact about the historical Jesus. From the very first its knowledge of the historical Jesus was its chief treasure, the basis of its religious experience, and its point of departure from contemporary religions. C. Accordingly, the gap between Jesus and Paul was much less than usually supposed.

Hopwood's conclusions largely concur with those of Formgeschichte, when properly applied. Many scholars have failed to avail themselves of Formgeschichte because of the extremes to which the method has been subjected. Hopwood himself comes under this title when he writes, "The determination of the 'form' is too much a matter of subjective judgment, as is also the standard whereby to test the historical validity of the 'form' concerned".¹ Such a criticism is due only to critics who have classified the forms on a hair-splitting basis, and who have thrown aside all normal considerations in an effort to make the gospels appear unhistorical.

Hopwood is right in making much of the personal impact of Jesus upon his hearers. By such an impact the typical religious experience of an early Christian was started. Mark shows the people amazed, following Jesus in crowds. He did not teach the formal theories of the scribes, but a warm, popular faith which appealed to the common people. John, too,

1. Hopwood, REC, 13.

shows Jesus as a popular prophet and herald of God. Luke, while he notes the prominence of Pharisees, scribes, and the religious aristocracy, does so with the same purpose in mind, namely, to show the powerful impact of Jesus himself. Scribe or tax-gatherer, the listener was permanently impressed. It was Jesus' own characteristic forms, such as the parable, which endeared him to these various people.

Luke 1,1-4 gives the clearest picture of how the developing tradition was handed down from eyewitnesses to the evangelists. "The Synoptic Gospels are therefore motivated by a religious experience derived from the personal contact of many eyewitnesses with Jesus of Nazareth. Allowing for the influence of later interpretation, we have here the record of what these eyewitnesses made of Him who stood in their midst for a brief while. These Gospels are therefore basic authorities for the knowledge of the religious experience which created the primitive Church".¹ Approaching the material from this point of view, Hopwood retains a place for militant Messianism and a modified kingdom-apocalypticism in the synoptics. He views John not as exactly unhistorical, but late in date, and full of the author's personal reflections.

Hopwood defends his view of apocalypticism and Messianism by the contention that most of the disciples were Galileans, coming from a part of the country where such ideas were strongly entrenched. They suffered from belief in a

1. Hopwood, REC, 16.

"sensual kingdom" and "human type" of Messiah. His view of the empirical significance of the resurrection is especially in accord with our findings in the field of Formgeschichte. We must remember the psychological inheritance of the disciples. "The modern distinctions between the physical and the spiritual, the physical and psychical, and the psychical and the spiritual, were not made by the disciples. We have to keep before us their psychological inheritance, their mental dispositions, and their ways of spiritual apprehension. When we do so, we become aware that a mixture of physical and psychical elements is present in the experience of the resurrection and in the interpretation and explanation of the experience".¹ In other words, it was Jesus' personality of which the disciples became aware in the resurrection experiences. If we make these simple allowances, the forms of the resurrection items are just what we should expect. We need not brand them as legend or myth; we need only to recognize that the items find their Sitz im Leben in the impression which Jesus had made upon his friends, interpreted in view of their psychical experiences of the resurrection. When Formgeschichte joins hands with a historical reconstruction of first-century religious experience, the resurrection items emerge as historical accounts. Hopwood thus describes a similar situation at Pentecost: "...the new religious power

1. Hopwood, REC, 129.

proved too much for the normal mental mechanisms of personality, and found an outlet in abnormal sensory phenomena".¹ Though perhaps unreproducible by us, these accounts cannot be laughed out of court as unhistorical. Psychology is only beginning to disclose how accurately they reproduce the experiences of those concerned. Again, while the eschatological thought-forms of the primitive church soon went out of date, the experience which led to their expression remained valid. The Jesus of history was not changed into a Christ-cult, or it would have perished like other cults of the day. In attacking the scholars who do not understand this personal relationship to Jesus, Hopwood says that they have "studied Church beginnings by eliminating the vital experiential elements which began what came to be the Christian Church".²

3. The bearing of Formgeschichte upon these facts, and conclusion on the question of gospel historicity.

Although the above material does not present a strictly formgeschichtlich view, it has great importance in connection with Formgeschichte. It demonstrates that in the early days there could be no Christian religious experience apart from a valid knowledge of Jesus himself. It reminds us that the thought-forms preserved in the New Testament, like the literary forms, have a historical basis. It verifies

1. Hopwood, REC, 157.

2. Hopwood, REC, 323.

our determination to find the Sitz im Leben of the Gospel material in the life of Jesus himself, and in his relationship with those who were nearest to him. Unless the material is considered in relation to the historical Jesus, it is not worth considering at all. Formgeschichte thus becomes a natural bridge between the earliest years and the time of our canonical gospels. Moreover, it explains how the material could be preserved during this period without notable losses. It shows how the forms themselves are related to Jesus' life, and it verifies the historicity of the gospel account.

V. CONCLUSIONS

We may now summarize the evidence which has been presented, and indicate the importance of Formgeschichte in establishing the historicity of the gospel account about Jesus. I believe that the foregoing evidence allows us to regard the thesis as proved.

We have seen that, viewed in the light of Formgeschichte, the gospels offer a preponderance of evidence in favor of the historicity of Jesus as pictured by the evangelists. The gospel accounts are essentially accurate. Conversely, the inaccuracies are usually in non-essentials, or are the result of editorial activity that can be readily deleted. Formgeschichte indicates that the gospel material was widely used at a very early date. This use could have arisen out of nothing less than a basis in historical facts. Jesus actually lived. The Christ-myth idea is a hopeless error.

The wide use of gospel material in the Christian community increases our confidence in its historicity. The more this material was used, and the more it was accepted as reliable and accurate, the greater the testimony to its validity. We have shown by a long series of examples how the literary forms were preserved as units, and how the presence of specific details proves that wide use did not

obliterate factual accuracy. We cannot account for this wide use of the material by assuming that the entire Christian community suddenly invented and wrote down an essentially homogeneous story about a half-forgotten Jesus, as if by miracle. Rather, we account for it by the fact that the material itself was reliable, and worthy of retention for historical purposes. No other view can be brought into accord with the known facts, or with the nature of the gospels themselves.

There can be no doubt that the *formgeschichtlich* view of the gospels is essentially correct. That is, the gospel material existed first in small units, and went through a period of oral tradition before these units were grouped together and written down. Hence, the whole question resolves itself into whether the *formgeschichtlich* view strengthens or diminishes the reliability of the material itself. We have found that the reliability is strengthened, because the forms grew out of the very soil of first-century Christianity, and were such that they could be easily remembered verbatim. They were suited to the background and environment of the people who used them. Being short and concise, they treasured only the most important events and words from the life of Jesus. As to their relative order there can never be absolute certainty, but as to their essential historicity there can scarcely be any doubt.

We have seen that the classification of forms, while

it has held a position of exalted importance, is really the least important part of Formgeschichte. We have kept our own classification in the simplest possible terms, thereby escaping the controversies which surround more complicated methods. On this basis we have found that the gospel forms have individuality. They are recognizable, and can be studied. We have derived many of the laws which govern them, and have found that these laws operate in such a manner as to increase our confidence in the historicity of the material. This method has the added advantage of dealing directly with the gospel material. It is largely independent of our views concerning such debatable issues as Ur-Marcus or Proto-Luke.

Outstanding evidence for historicity is found in the verisimilitude of the gospel forms. Verisimilitude is a valid characteristic of literary form, and is found on every hand in the gospels. Though the ipsissima verba of Jesus cannot be guaranteed, all the various forms testify to the same ipsissimus spiritus. That is, all the forms testify to an obvious unity of spirit in the gospel materials. Such unity is characteristic only of historical materials, while lies are notably dissimilar. A survey of first-century literature has shown that, while the gospels come to us in forms that are characteristic of that century, they have an individuality of their own. Both these facts corroborate the historicity of the account. In this respect the gospels

stand alone. Little or no help can be derived from the remainder of the New Testament, since it is not suited to formgeschichtlich investigation. A comparison of the canonical gospels with the pseudo-gospels shows the superiority of the literary forms in the former, and their superior claim to historicity. We have also noted how the gospel forms testify to the dominant historical place of the Jesus-element in early Christian experience -- a testimony which is eminently in accord with all that we know from other sources about the facts of early church history.

The contribution of Formgeschichte has heretofore been largely viewed as a literary matter. It is true that Formgeschichte makes such a contribution. It sheds new light upon the characteristic gospel forms, identifies them, and makes them more understandable. But the fault of most critics is that they have stopped at this point. Properly applied, and carried through to its logical conclusion, Formgeschichte also gives new light on the problems of historicity. Here, indeed, the testimony is even more important to New Testament scholarship than in the strictly literary field. Our evidence shows that the process by which the canonical gospels came into existence was a process which accurately retained the facts about the life of Jesus himself.

DIGEST OF THE DISSERTATION

There have been almost as many types of Formgeschichte as there have been writers in the field. It is therefore necessary to make a thorough examination of the previous work, in order to get a valid picture of the problem. All form-critics agree in emphasizing the unliterary character of the gospels, their origin in oral tradition, their preservation in small units, and their eventual compilation into the canonical state. The recognition of certain literary forms in the gospels is not especially new. The examination of these forms as a clue to gospel historicity, however, is very new. The characteristic viewpoints of leading critics in the field may be listed thus:

Schmidt: That the historical framework of the gospel units is artificial.

Dibelius: That early Christian preaching was the father of the gospels and the determining factor in establishing gospel forms.

Albertz: That the controversies, especially, have real historical worth, and are based on actual events in the life of Jesus.

Bultmann and Kundsinn: That the gospel material is largely the invention of the early Christian church, without much historical significance.

Bertram: That the cult practice was the determining factor, and there is no trustworthy history in the gospels.

Fascher: That the Sitz im Leben of the gospel forms ought to be sought first in the life of Jesus, and that a simpler terminology would aid in classifying the forms.

Easton: A good literary analysis, but doubt as to the value of Formgeschichte in historical judgments.

Riddle: That the gospels are church history rather than Jesus-history.

Taylor: Simplicity and ruggedness in classifying the forms: considerable confidence in the historicity of the material.

Fiebig: Strong arguments for historicity, but an overemphasis upon the rabbinic analogies to the gospels.

Dodd: Overemphasis upon the idea of kerygma, and upon "realized eschatology".

Scott: A reaffirmation of the general historicity of the gospel material, but more on traditional literary grounds than on formgeschichtlich grounds.

We next establish the fact that Formgeschichte, while a fresh approach to the gospels, is complementary rather than contradictory to the various solutions of the synoptic problem. Its sources must be largely restricted to the synoptic gospels. There are analogies in rabbinic and Greek literature, but their importance is usually overestimated. The extremes of Formgeschichte have been

so thoroughly exploited that we are now in a position to simplify the classifications and apply the new method more conclusively in the historical sphere. For this reason we demonstrate that the true field of Formgeschichte lies especially in proving the historicity of the gospel story about Jesus. A study of the forms themselves, of their general characteristics, of their first-century background, and of the laws which govern them, leads us to the conclusion that the method followed in this thesis is valid. The very fact that Formgeschichte is concerned with literary forms enables it to offer a working basis for historical judgments, for form and content cannot be divorced. They are two foci of the same ellipse.

An investigation of the forms demonstrates that, in the long run, historicity does not demand that we determine a specific date when the oral tradition was written down. This was a gradual process, but both oral and written traditions were trustworthy, and the material did not suffer from the possible delay.

The presence of verisimilitude and detail constitutes one of the strongest arguments for historicity on the basis of literary form. A thorough perusal of the material, especially as found in Mark, indicates that the form-units not only have the appearance of recounting actual facts, but are so full of details that they obviously stand in a line of

good tradition, not far removed from the historical scene. This argument is strengthened by the fact that details tend to drop out of oral tradition, and the form-units tend to shorten. The latter is proved by comparing units in Mark with similar units in Matthew and Luke. Accordingly, the longer and more detailed the narrative, the closer it is to the facts. The details are not fanciful additions, but evidences of historicity. The entire tradition underwent a process of contraction whereby the facts were crystalized into their most cogent form and preserved for posterity. They did not, as some affirm, grow longer and more legendary by the process of community accretions. Such a process is directly opposed to the rules of oral tradition.

Even though we are so far from the first-century scene that the ipsissima verba of Jesus cannot be guaranteed, we certainly can recover from the gospels his ipsissimus spiritus. There is an obvious unity of spirit in the gospels which smacks of historicity. Why would Matthew and Luke copy Mark unless they thought Mark knew the truth? The gospels do not have the literary form of disconnected inventions. The very fact that they have come to us in the authentic forms of the first century is their chief guarantee of historicity. We are increasingly learning that the spirit in which biography is written is as important for history as are the facts themselves.

Gospel historicity is further attested by gospel uniqueness. There is no other literature exactly like the synoptics. They demand the *formgeschichtlich* method, but that same method cannot be applied to John or Acts. A comparison between the canonical and uncanonical gospels shows that the former stand alone. The uncanonical writings are full of crude magic and theological motives, both of which are largely absent in the synoptics. This uniqueness of the synoptics reassures us of their historicity. Viewed in the light of *Formgeschichte* they can stand on their own feet and defend the story they tell.

Finally, *Formgeschichte* bears testimony to the dominant place of the Jesus-element in early Christian experience. The primitive Christians were interested in Jesus most of all. They sought to have a spiritual experience of him, and to learn about him. The forms bear the imprint of these influences, and the dominant Jesus-element in the gospels correlates all other New Testament testimony.

For the proper use of *Formgeschichte* one must have the proper point of view. He must abandon his pet theories and his temptation to subjectivism, and examine the gospel material itself. When he does so, he finds that the *Sitz im Leben* of the material most naturally lies in the life of Jesus. The early Christians assumed that this was the case, and our study of literary forms proves it to be so.

There can scarcely be any doubt that the fundamental contentions of Formgeschichte about the period of oral tradition are correct. Moreover, Formgeschichte offers real help in historical judgments, leading us to have a deeper confidence in the canonical materials than we had previously thought would be scientific or scholarly.

The bibliography includes every book and practically every article of importance on the subject. These have all been covered in the preparation of the thesis, and the essentials have been included in the body of the thesis. However, the major contentions of the thesis, and the emphasis upon those aspects of form which verify historicity, are original.

BIBLIOGRAPHY

- Albertz, Martin S
Die synoptischen Streitgespräche. Berlin; Trowitzsch,
 1921.
- Albertz, Martin FA
Zur Formengeschichte der Auferstehungsberichte.
In Zeitschrift für die neutestamentliche Wissenschaft,
 1922, Heft 4.
- Barton, George A. AA
The Apostolic Age and the New Testament. Philadelphia;
 University of Pennsylvania Press, 1936.
- Bertram, Georg LJC
Die Leidensgeschichte Jesu und den Christuskult.
 Göttingen; Vandenhoeck, 1922.
- Bertram, Georg TM
Neues Testament und historische Methode. Tübingen;
 Mohr, 1928.
- Brun, Lyder ACU
Auferstehung Christi in der urchristlichen Überlieferung.
 Giessen; Töpelmann, 1925.
- Bultmann, Rudolf EE
Die Erforschung der synoptischen Evangelien. Giessen;
 Töpelmann, 2. Auflage 1930.
- Bultmann, Rudolf GT
Die Geschichte der synoptischen Tradition. Göttingen;
 Vandenhoeck, 1. Auflage 1921, 2. Auflage 1931.
- Bultmann, Rudolf JW
Jesus and the Word. New York; Scribner, 1934.
 (A translation by Louise P. Smith and Erminie Huntress
 of Jesus, published by the Deutsche Bibliothek in
 Berlin, 1926; translation follows the second
 edition, 1934.)

- Burkitt, F. Crawford CG
Church and Gnosis. Cambridge; University Press, 1932.
- Burkitt, F. Crawford SLJ
The Earliest Sources for the Life of Jesus. Boston and
 New York; Houghton Mifflin Co., 1910; revised edition,
 London, Constable, 1922.
- Burkitt, F. Crawford HT
The Gospel History and its Transmission. Edinburgh;
 T. and T. Clark, third edition 1911.
- Burkitt, F. Crawford JC
Jesus Christ. London; Blackie, 1932.
- Burney, Charles Fox PL
The Poetry of our Lord. Oxford; Clarendon Press, 1925.
- Cadoux, Arthur Temple SG
The Sources of the Second Gospel. New York; Macmillan,
 c. 1935 (undated).
- Case, Shirley Jackson HJ
The Historicity of Jesus. Chicago; University of
 Chicago Press, second edition 1928.
- Case, Shirley Jackson J
Jesus. Chicago; University of Chicago Press, 1927.
- Crum, J. M. C. JG
The Original Jerusalem Gospel. London; Constable, 1927.
- Dibelius, Martin BJC
Die Botschaft von Jesus Christus. Tübingen; Mohr, 1935.
- Dibelius, Martin ANT
A Fresh Approach to the New Testament and Early Christian
 Literature. New York; Scribner, 1936.
- Dibelius, Martin GCC
Gospel Criticism and Christology. London; I. Nicholson
 and Watson, 1935.
- Dibelius, Martin G
Gethsemane. In The Crozer Quarterly, Vol. 12,
 pp. 254-263; July, 1935. (Translation by Enslin.)
- Dibelius, Martin SCG
The Structure and Literary Character of the Gospels.
In The Harvard Theological Review, Vol. 20, p. 151ff,
 1927.

- Dibelius, Martin TG
From Tradition to Gospel. New York; Scribner, 1935.
 (A translation by Bertram Lee Woolf of Die Formgeschichte des Evangeliums; Tübingen; Mohr, 1. Auflage, 1919, 2. Auflage, 1933.)
- Dodd, Charles Harold AP
The Apostolic Preaching and its Developments.
 London; Hodder and Stoughton, 1936.
- Dodd, Charles Harold FGN
The Framework of the Gospel Narrative. In The Expository Times, Vol. 43, no. 9, p. 396ff; 1932.
- Dodd, Charles Harold HG
History and the Gospel. London; Nisbet and Co., 1938.
- Dodd, Charles Harold PK
The Parables of the Kingdom. New York; Scribner, 1936.
- Easton, Burton S. CG
Christ in the Gospels. New York; Scribner, 1930.
- Easton, Burton S. GBG
The Gospel Before the Gospels. New York; Scribner, 1928.
- Easton, Burton S. RJ
 and
- Fiske, Charles
The Real Jesus. New York; Harper, 1929.
- Fascher, Erich FM
Die formgeschichtliche Methode. Giessen; Töpelmann, 1924.
- Fiebig, Paul GGJ
Altjüdische Gleichnisse und die Gleichnisse Jesu.
 Tübingen and Leipzig; J.C.B. Mohr, 1904.
- Fiebig, Paul EE
Über den Erzählungsstil der Evangelien. 1925.
- Fiebig, Paul EGJ
Rabbinische Formengeschichte und Geschichtlichkeit Jesu.
 Leipzig; Engel, 1931.
- Fridrichsen, Anton PM
Le Problème du Miracle. Strasbourg, Paris; Librairie Istra, 1925.

- Goguel, Maurice JN
Jesus the Nazarene. London; Unwin, 1926. (A translation by Frederick Stephens of Jésus de Nazareth, mythe ou histoire? Paris; Payot, 1925.)
- Goguel, Maurice INT
Introduction au Nouveau Testament. Paris; Leroux, 1922.
- Goguel, Maurice LJ
The Life of Jesus. New York; Macmillan, 1933. (A translation by Olive Wyon of La vie de Jésus; Paris, Payot, 1932.)
- Goguel, Maurice LM
Luke and Mark. In The Harvard Theological Review, Vol. 26, p. 1ff; 1933.
- Goguel, Maurice NEE
Une nouvelle école de critique évangélique, la forme und traditions-geschichtliche schule. In Revue de l'histoire des religions, vol. 94, pp. 114-160, 1926.
- Goguel, Maurice PJ
The Problem of Jesus. In The Harvard Theological Review, Vol. 22, p. 93ff; 1928.
- Goodspeed, Edgar J. INT
An Introduction to the New Testament. Chicago; University of Chicago Press, 1937.
- Grant, Frederick C. FC
Form Criticism. New York; Willet, Clark and Co., 1934. (Including The Study of the Synoptic Gospels by Rudolf Bultmann, and Primitive Christianity by Karl Kundsinn).
- Grant, Frederick C. FCR
Form Criticism: A New Method of Research. In Religion in Life, Vol. 3, pp. 351-366; 1934.
- Grant, Frederick C. GG
The Growth of the Gospels. New York; Abingdon Press, 1933.
- Helm, MacKinley AP
After Pentecost. New York; Harper, 1936.
- Hopwood, P. G. S. REC
The Religious Experience of the Primitive Church. Edinburgh; T. and T. Clark, 1936.

- Koehler, Ludwig PT
Das formgeschichtliche Problem des Neuen Testaments.
 Tübingen; Mohr, 1927.
- Kundsin, Karl ULE
Das Urchristentum im Lichte der Evangelienforschung.
 Giessen; Töpelmann, 1929.
- Lake, Kirsopp
 and
 Lake, Silva INT
An Introduction to the New Testament. New York and
 London; Harper, 1937.
- Lightfoot, Robert H. HIG
History and Interpretation in the Gospels. London;
 Hodder and Stoughton, 1934.
- Loisy, Alfred AP
Les actes des apôtres. Paris; Rieder, 1925 (new edition).
- Loisy, Alfred EL
L'évangile selon Luc. Paris; Nourry, 1924.
- Loisy, Alfred LNT
Les livres du nouveau Testament. Paris; Nourry, 1922.
- Loisy, Alfred JTE
Jesus et la tradition évangélique. Paris; Nourry, 1910.
- Lyman, Mary Ely CE
The Christian Epic. New York; Scribner, 1936.
- Menzies, Allen EG
The Earliest Gospel. London; Macmillan, 1901.
- Montefiore, C. G. LT
Rabbinic Literature and Gospel Teachings. London;
 Macmillan and Co., 1930.
- Petrie, W. M. Flinders GG
Growth of the Gospels. New York; Baker, 1910.
- Riddle, Donald Wayne CLL
Early Christian Life as Reflected in its Literature.
 Chicago and New York; Willet, Clark and Co., 1936.
- Riddle, Donald Wayne JP
Jesus and the Pharisees. Chicago; University of
 Chicago Press, 1928.

- Riddle, Donald Wayne M
The Martyrs. Chicago; University of Chicago Press, 1931.
- Schmidt, Karl Ludwig RGJ
Der Rahmen der Geschichte Jesu. Berlin; Trowitzsch und Sohn, 1919.
- Scott, Ernest Findlay GT
The Gospel and its Tributaries. Edinburgh; T. and T. Clark, 1928.
- Scott, Ernest Findlay LNT
Literature of the New Testament. New York; Columbia University Press, 1932.
- Scott, Ernest Findlay CG
The New Criticism of the Gospels. In The Harvard Theological Review, Vol. 19, p. 143ff; 1926.
- Scott, Ernest Findlay VGR
The Validity of the Gospel Record. New York; Scribner, 1938.
- Stanton, Vincent H. GHD
The Gospels as Historic Documents. Cambridge; Cambridge University Press, 1903.
- Streeter, Burnett Hillman FG
The Four Gospels. London; Macmillan, 1927.
- Taylor, Vincent FGT
The Formation of the Gospel Tradition. London; MacMillan, 1933.
- Taylor, Vincent GI
The Gospels -- A Short Introduction. London; Epworth Press, 1930.
- Wernle, Paul SKLJ
The Sources of Our Knowledge of the Life of Jesus. London; Bost. A.U.A., 1907 (Translation by Edward Lummis.)
- Woolf, Bertram Lee BBGS
Backgrounds and Beginnings of the Gospel Story. London; Iver Nicolson and Watson, 1935.
- - - - -

Biblical quotations are from the American Standard Version.
 Apocryphal quotations are from M. R. James, The Apocryphal New Testament.

AUTOBIOGRAPHY OF PAUL EDWARD SHELTON

- Birth:** July 7, 1908, at Marietta, Ohio.
- Parents:** William H. Sheldon, attorney, and the late Mildred O. Sheldon.
- Family:** Married in 1929 to Emily Otto Sheldon, of Marietta, Ohio.
Children: Emily Mildred Sheldon, born September 28, 1930, and Violet Maria Sheldon, born October 10, 1937.
- Education:** Privately tutored until ready to enter High School. Graduated from Marietta High School, 1926. Three years at Marietta College, Marietta, Ohio. Senior year at Boston University College of Liberal Arts; A.B. degree, Boston, 1930. Three years at Boston University School of Theology; S.T.B. degree in 1933; awarded the Roswell Robinson fellowship for study abroad. Studied at the University of Berlin during 1933-1934; extensive travel throughout the European countries, Palestine, Syria, Egypt, and Russia. Student in the Graduate School of Boston University, 1934-1939. This dissertation is presented in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of Ph. D., expected in June, 1939.
- Professional:** Member of the Ohio Conference of the Methodist Episcopal Church since 1929. Pastor, Bethany Congregational Church in Lynn, Massachusetts, 1930. Pastor, Topsfield Federated Church, in Topsfield, Massachusetts, since 1930. Member of the Twentieth Century Club of Boston. Member of the Society of Biblical Literature and Exegesis. Lecturer on international affairs.

THE HISTORY OF THE CITY OF BOSTON

FROM THE FIRST SETTLEMENT TO THE PRESENT TIME

BY SAMUEL JOHNSON, ESQ. OF BOSTON

IN TWO VOLUMES. VOL. II.

THE HISTORY OF THE CITY OF BOSTON, FROM THE FIRST SETTLEMENT TO THE PRESENT TIME, BY SAMUEL JOHNSON, ESQ. OF BOSTON. IN TWO VOLUMES. VOL. II. THE HISTORY OF THE CITY OF BOSTON, FROM THE FIRST SETTLEMENT TO THE PRESENT TIME, BY SAMUEL JOHNSON, ESQ. OF BOSTON. IN TWO VOLUMES. VOL. II.

THE HISTORY OF THE CITY OF BOSTON, FROM THE FIRST SETTLEMENT TO THE PRESENT TIME, BY SAMUEL JOHNSON, ESQ. OF BOSTON. IN TWO VOLUMES. VOL. II.



JUN 6 1956

Date Due

Demco 293-5			

BOSTON UNIVERSITY



1 1719 01979 1716

